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Oral history interview with Don Baum, 1986
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Contact Information

Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Don Baum on January 31, 1986. The interview took place in Chicago, IL, and was conducted by Sue Ann Kendall for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

[Tape 1, side A]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Don, I would like to go back, way back, in your life and talk to you about your childhood, in hopes of getting information about you as person and you as an artist. I know you were born in 1922.

DON BAUM: Right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: In Michigan.

DON BAUM: Escanaba, Michigan.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And where is Escanaba?

DON BAUM: Escanaba is a town in the upper peninsula of Michigan, which is actually north of the U.P., north of Wisconsin. I was born there because my grandfather came there as a Russian Jewish immigrant, and as a tinsmith, when that was very little settled. He traveled around in that part of the country as a tinsmith, essentially. And then at a certain point after he succeeded up to some financial level (chuckles), he started a hardware store.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And this was in Escanaba?

DON BAUM: This was in Escanaba.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And how big a place was this?

DON BAUM: Well, there were about 18,000 people in Escanaba at the time that I grew up there. Then my father, on his death, took over his hardware store. So that's the background. My father came from a very large family. Most did not stay in the area. I know very little about them. I mean, I knew the aunts and uncles but I don't know much about background or anything, other than that. And my mother's family came from, well, the south originally, and then to Indiana. That's a probably English and Welsh background. And my maternal grandfather was a first settler in another part of the Upper Peninsula, Trenary, Michigan, where he and his twin brother opened a general store. But he was also a jack of many trades and eventually settled in another little town. But I remember a lot of sort of awareness about, well, nature isn't quite the right word, but he was a kind of outdoors person, hunted and fished—also a very generous man, my grandfather. It was always a very wonderful experience to go to visit them when I was a child because there was always something going on that was different than my life in Escanaba. My mother was one of three girls and a boy. I was much closer to her family because they also stayed around there, and I used to spend my summers visiting them. They also were kind of pioneers, in a sense, because they had bought land out on Lake Superior, a very beautiful and rather remote place is where they built places. I used to

spend almost all of my summers on Lake Superior or around that area, when I was a kid.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's supposed to be beautiful country.

DON BAUM: It is. It still is beautiful, but it is unfortunately changing as a lot of these wild areas have become parks and campgrounds.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Is there any of your family still up there?

DON BAUM: Yes, I have two brothers, one a year older and one two years younger. They both live in Escanaba and they both have families and so forth. And I have a sister who's ten years younger than I am who lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, who is a teacher.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. About when was it that your grandfather came from Russia? Do you have any recollection of dates?

DON BAUM: Well, I remember him, and so. . . I must have been. . . I was born in 1922, and he died within a few years after that. I would think it was around 1900 or slightly before that. But I really don't know, and I've never heard anybody in my family talk about that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Do you remember him as a tinsmith?

DON BAUM: No, no. Because by that time he had this hardware store established and it was very successful, and he was doing very well, and so forth.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you ever help out in the store?

DON BAUM: No, very little. Both of my brothers did, but, see, I was the middle child and somehow or another that meant I didn't have to do that, and I didn't particularly want to. But it is interesting that I think probably of the three of us I'm the only one who really is involved in making things, or using tools, or anything like that. It's kind of funny. Because my youngest brother—he's retired—but he was an insurance salesman, insurance man, and my oldest brother was a drug salesman _____.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So you really went off in a different direction?

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And was there any art in your parents' background or in your family at all?

DON BAUM: No. I can't think of anything that was particularly stimulating. I think my first interest in that occurred when I was in high school. Escanaba was really pretty provincial and, although there was an art teacher, the kinds of activities which we were involved in. . . I remember making a puppet for a puppet show, and I remember painting some sets for a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, or something like that. And that was sort of all there was. I actually, while I was in high school, was mostly interested in writing.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Really! But now in grade school, you weren't one of these kids who started drawing at the age of four and went from there?

DON BAUM: No, I don't remember much about [it]. I don't remember much about that at all. I was editor, co-editor of this school paper, and worked on that for several years, and worked at the Daily

Press in Escanaba as a kind of a co-op worker. So I was very interested in journalism. But when it came time to go away to college, I didn't have any idea what I wanted to do, and so I went to Michigan State University—or as it was then, Michigan State College at East Lansing—in hotel administration.

SUE ANN KENDALL: For heaven's sakes. (chuckles)

DON BAUM: Which, I don't even know, at this. . . I think it was a sort of a desperate move. I felt I had to decide. I think it was expected of me that I make some decision as to what I wanted to do—or why I was going to college.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, to justify it.

DON BAUM: And it was, although my father was very helpful, especially during those two years—although I worked all through my college career; I had jobs, and sometimes a number of them at one time. But he was very helpful and encouraging, and I guess I might have done that in a sense to make him feel that I was on the track of something rather specific and concrete. And I'm not even sure at that point that I really knew anything else about what I wanted to do. When I got to Michigan State, I really don't know what sort of triggered it, but I took a course in painting from Kathryn Winckler. She was one of the art professors there, and she and her friend Alma Goetsch had a Frank Lloyd Wright house in Okemos. It was part of a project for faculty members that was never completed, but a number of the houses were built. She was a very generous lady and sometimes we went out and painted watercolors, and afterwards she would sometimes invite us to her house, and it was the first time I'd ever really seen what I would call architecture. I mean, I'd been in a lot of houses, but. . . (laughter)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. Buildings, but not architecture.

DON BAUM: Right, yeah. And I was very, very impressed by it. So then I began to take other art courses. The two years that I was there I probably took about four art courses, including, I think, one semester of a survey and the rest of it were _____ drawing or painting classes—in the meantime, struggling with this hotel administration effort, which consisted of subjects like chemistry and accounting and so on. Well, I liked foods and nutrition because I enjoyed cooking and I'm still very interested in that. But by the end of the first year, I was beginning to be sort of doubtful, but I didn't really still know what was happening. Then we had to work in hotels during the summer as part of the curriculum, and I got a job at the Beverly Shores Hotel in Indiana. It's now gone, but it was a very small, very nice hotel. I got a summer job there, which is what we had to do. So I spent that summer in this area, and I came to Chicago several times, but I don't even then especially remember going to the Art Institute or anything like that. I might have, but I don't remember it. Then I went back to Michigan State, and another year of sheer torture while I failed econ [economics— Ed.]—or failed accounting and got D in econ, and. . . (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: It was not your shining hour.

DON BAUM: Retook chemistry, and I can't remember. But I was enjoying very much my classes in literature, and then also the few courses which I took in art. So I felt, you know, this is ridiculous. But I had to work again in a hotel as part of the hotel ad program, and I hadn't really, I still didn't know what was happening. So I got a job in Chicago at the. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: This is your second summer?

DON BAUM: Yeah. At the St. Clair Hotel, which now has another name, but it's up on the near north side by the Contemporary Museum. It's Ohio, maybe and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's right where I'm staying.

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, it might. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: At the Ridgemont. It must be right in there.

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, it might. . . Well, the Ridgemont was the Eastgate, wasn't it?

SUE ANN KENDALL: I don't know.

DON BAUM: Yeah. See, there were two hotels there, and one was the Eastgate and one was the St. Clair. Anyway, it was a terrible job. I mean, it was just totally beyond me. It was no good. I was the head of the food commissary and the place was just filthy, and there were a lot of teenage kids that knew more about how to screw the customers. (uproarious laughter) Anyway, I stayed about three weeks, and I. . . You know, Chicago was overwhelming. I didn't know anybody. So at the end of about three weeks, I called my father up and I said, "I'm just so fed up with this. I can't really hack it." And he said, "Well, why don't you come home and see if you can get a summer job here, and we can talk about it." And I said, "Well, that's fine, but," I said, "if I come home, I want to come back here and go to the School of the Art Institute in the fall.

SUE ANN KENDALL: How did you know that?

DON BAUM: Well, I don't know. By that time, somehow or another, this had crept into my consciousness, and I knew by then that I wanted to go to the Art Institute.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What did he say to that?

DON BAUM: Well, he said, "Okay."

SUE ANN KENDALL: I was going to ask you, what did your parents think of you taking those classes in art at Michigan State? Were they pretty _____?

DON BAUM: Well, they didn't seem to have any particular reactions to them, and well, there was never much discussion about them. So I came back—it was during the war—and I went to the School of the Art Institute to register and I met David Aaron, who was also entering. He was from Bridgeport, Connecticut, and we just became friends and found a place to live together. So then for a number of years, we shared different places, and we both went to school and did our thing. Then we moved to 645 North Michigan Avenue, which is long gone, but it was one of the last mansions on Michigan Avenue, and it was run by a very curious couple named Major and Mrs. Allen. He was maybe a former retired army major or something. But they ran this place in a kind of, well, almost like a nineteenth century salon in a way. They had at least one a week and sometimes several times, "evenings," and they would have somebody who they knew—or even somebody who lived in the house, because everybody who lived there was an artist or an architect or something or other.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Fascinating.

DON BAUM: It was a wonderful atmosphere in a way, especially for a young person, and they'd have these "evenings." You could go or not. They'd serve food, and it was like two dollars, or something like that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Lovely, yeah.

DON BAUM: For a long time I really did enjoy it. It was a chance to meet people, but also to sort of see what other people, outside of my student involvement. . . But also, David and I had a top floor studio in this house. And across the hall lived Ethel Spears.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Ohh.

DON BAUM: She was a very close friend of Kathleen Blackshear, and Kathleen was one of the teachers of the School of the Art Institute, and I was in her classes.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, yeah.

DON BAUM: I felt immediately a sort of bond with her, and she was very, very open to young people, especially I think if she felt they were at least interested in her. Anyway, she was a very important influence and I continued to know her from that time, really until she left Chicago, because. . . Later I was a teacher and I was using the Art Institute slide department; she was also using it. We just became very good friends. But I think she was real important and she encouraged me to enter exhibitions and to work independently outside of what I was doing for school.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. But it must have been a real support for you, in a way, that maybe you weren't aware of, to be in a living situation like that with other people who were professionally in the arts in some way.

DON BAUM: Yes, that's right. I had begun to meet other artists and so, you know, it was a very good period. Well. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Excuse me, were those people patrons of the arts in Chicago?

DON BAUM: No. No. The people that I met were beginning artists or in some cases people working in the fields in art.

SUE ANN KENDALL: No, no. I meant the major and his wife.

DON BAUM: Were they? Not really. But they liked music and art, and they were sort of nineteenth century. A lot of people. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Their whole approach and the salon _____.

DON BAUM: That's also where I met Miyoko Ito.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Ohh.

DON BAUM: See, she lived there. And Ralph Rapson, the architect, lived there. There were always distinguished kinds of people—later it became more distinguished people, in any case, that lived there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Who else? Can you think of others who lived there?

DON BAUM: Oh, Ralph and. . . There were some. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: It must have been quite a large place.

DON BAUM: Yeah, it was. There were sometimes, you know, there must have been about ten, twelve to fifteen apartments. Well, they were sometimes just rooms, but everybody had kitchen facilities of some kind or another.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Really.

DON BAUM: And it was built before the fire department or anything else concerned themselves about problems of safety.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. (laughter)

DON BAUM: But it was essentially very efficiently run. No, I don't remember offhand anyone besides. . . See, there was a woman named Zada Clark; she was a commercial artist, but she was important, and she knew a lot of artists and I met them at her place. But Miyo [Miyoko Ito—Ed.] and Ralph were the two probably that I knew the best. And we became, Miyo and I became friends then, and until she died we saw each other, sometimes a great deal, depending on different periods.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. But that represents, at that time, the younger generation of artists that would grow up in Chicago, whereas most of the next generation—after say Weisenborn. . .

DON BAUM: Yes, yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: . . .all of those people.

DON BAUM: See, first of all, I'm chronologically somewhat younger.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh yes, indeed.

DON BAUM: But also, I didn't meet a lot of those people, although eventually I did, until I went to the University of Chicago, in 1943 or. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, so this was more an Art Institute school crowd, perhaps?

DON BAUM: Yeah, and David Aaron and I had a lot of student friends at the school, none of whom I've had particular contact with since. In fact, I don't remember anybody particularly from my days at the School of the Art Institute, except David. We knew a lot of different people at the time, saw a lot of different people, but I don't remember the names of anyone in particular. I left there after a year and went to the Institute of Design. Part of that was because I felt—outside of Kathleen Blackshear—I did not like the school.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I was going to ask you what your experience was there.

DON BAUM: Well, you know, I had figure drawing, and, well, I just didn't particularly enjoy it. I had a design class and I hated that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Was it too conservative?

DON BAUM: Well, it seemed so. . . I guess it was probably because it was so conservative, but it seemed so sort of tiresome, so involved with discipline and so little involved in any kind of expressiveness.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Almost an academic approach?

DON BAUM: Academic, yeah. Whereas Kathleen, in both her art history—and the first semester I was there Helen Gardner taught the survey, so she was my first teacher.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That must have been wonderful.

DON BAUM: Well, it was very interesting, because, of course, she'd written this book, but she was pretty old by then. And then Kathleen taught this class which she later continued for many years; it was called Design Lecture when I was there, and I think it was the most important kind of school experience I had, because she was primarily interested in the twentieth century movements, and she talked about them, both in her art history classes and also in this Design Lecture class. She had no interest in the Renaissance or the Baroque period or anything like that—and not much really in the sort of classical, traditional history of art. But she was very interested in the twentieth century. So what happened was that we would be given assignments which we did at home, and then we brought the work back into the class, and she simply critiqued everything in front of the class. Everybody brought their work back, and she talked about it. She was all for, you know, any kind of experimentation with materials, and at the same time very interested in what the meaning of it was, you know, what kind of symbolism. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, content.

DON BAUM: . . . might be involved and the content and so forth. I think it was the most formative early art experience which I had. It was totally different from the sort of thing that happened in these other classes. Anyway, I got the feeling that somehow or another, it wasn't what I wanted. So I left there and I registered at the School of Design, as it was then called. I started in the summer, and I was the only new student. I don't think there were more than about twelve students there; I don't know, you know, it was during the war, they were in the Chez Paris [night club—Ed.] over on West—or on East Ontario. When I started I was the only new student, and so I had this kind of tutoring from Moholy Nagy. I mean, every morning—or almost every morning—I'd go into his office and he'd talk to me about plastics.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, I see. (laughs)

DON BAUM: Well, see, I began to wonder if I was in the right place again because. . . (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: From food _____ to plastics, huh?

DON BAUM: Right, right. But, you know, it was a whole new world, and of course it struck me as if the Institute of Design had taken art teaching out of the academy and sort of put it into context with the technology of _____ . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Of real life.

DON BAUM: Of real life, yeah. I had a number of very good teachers there, besides Moholy. In fact, under Moholy, I worked on this—they tried to give students problems which came out of some real [leader] industry or something. There were two brothers that had some kind of cancer that. . . They were farmers and they couldn't—I've forgotten what this is called—but anyway, they couldn't take sunlight. So I was given this project to make these two masks for them out of this particular kind of plastic. This was a very difficult thing for me, because it. . . They had a very big machine shop, but it required all of kinds of techniques, but there was a guy there and he helped me. I finally completed these two things, and they were successful.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So they required you to actually construct, not just design something, but

actually to carry it through.

DON BAUM: Carry it through. That was very typical of I.D. too. And then we all worked in a basic workshop, and everybody made a hand sculpture. That was part of the Bauhaus point of view; that was one of the first projects anybody did. That was a good experience, in another way, because I learned a lot about materials and techniques in a way that I would never have learned.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Very different than the Art Institute, it sounds like.

DON BAUM: Yeah. There was no art history and no figure drawing. And Johannes Mohlzahn, who was, I thought, a wonderful artist. . . I don't know what ever really happened to him, but he came from Germany and had been associated with the Bauhaus there; he taught Visual Fundamentals. And in Visual Fundamentals, you know, you work with line and color, et cetera.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, design.

DON BAUM: But it's the Bauhaus approach, and it was really the basis of a lot of teaching that goes on in contemporary art today. And he was also a very generous person and I was seeing his paintings, going to his house, getting to know him, and working in class and trying very hard to sort of grasp the concepts that he. . . And I found that very rich. But I don't know. . . Well, first of all, I was working in a defense plant, and it was pretty hard, because I had a full-time job at night, and then I'd go to school during the day. I don't quite know how it came over me, but I began to get more and more interested in knowing more about art history. So in fall of '44, I moved to Hyde Park, lived on 57th Street in a room, and registered at the University of Chicago. Since I'd had two years of college, I had to take three comprehensives to satisfy the requirements for the degree that was then being given, which was this Ph.B. degree. That's the Hutchins degree, Bachelor of Philosophy. It was a three-year degree. Hutchins, you know, believed in this. It was the Hutchins plan. You took these courses and then took comprehensives at the end of the year. That was what your grade was. Well, I had three or four of those. I had biological science, I had two in humanities, and one in foreign language, in French.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It was basically a well-rounded liberal arts program.

DON BAUM: Yeah, but also this University of Chicago plan, where you don't have to go to class, or you didn't have to take any tests, but at the end of the year, you had to go and sit in the gymnasium and write these comprehensives.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: I had applied for admission to the master's program in art history at that time. I was accepted, and so I began to take. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Now, wait. When you first came to the University of Chicago, you immediately applied for the master's, or did you. . .

DON BAUM: Yes, because, see, I only had these X number of courses to complete the Ph.B. degree.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I see what you mean.

DON BAUM: And at that time, what they really wanted you to do is to take the Ph.B. and then go immediately into the master's program, so they didn't really give a four-year B.A. at that point.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: So I started taking art history courses, and the first course I took—I was just ill-advised by someone—was a course in Chinese painting, and it was rather advanced; it was a three-or four-hundred-level class, taught by a guy who was a very famous authority in Chinese. . . Well, I had no experience with Asian art at all. And so I sat in on the class, and at the end (chuckles), again, unknowingly. . . He asked if we wanted to take the exam. Well, about two people out of this class raised their hand, so I raised my hand. I thought, “Well, how else do you get a grade?” So I took this exam; well, of course, I failed the exam miserably because, I mean, it was impossible information for me at that time.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, yeah.

DON BAUM: But I didn't feel terribly bad about that, because I didn't feel especially drawn to Chinese art—or to Oriental art, in any case. So I went on and began to take all the regular courses: medieval art and ancient art, and very little twentieth century art.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Hmm.

DON BAUM: In the meantime, I was. . . A number of things happened. For about two years I had been showing my work in various artists' groups, or a couple of times in little galleries, and I had a painting in the Chicago and Vicinity show in 1946 or something like that. So I felt like something was going on, that as far as becoming an artist, that was sort of going along side by side with this other _____.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And this was pretty much on your own at this point?

DON BAUM: Yeah, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You were supporting yourself, as well?

DON BAUM: Yeah, I'd worked, I had several jobs. I worked in hotels all around Chicago _____.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That hotel training came in handy? (laughter)

DON BAUM: Hotel training! Boy. . . And I worked at the university and, you know, I just always had jobs of one kind or another, and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Doing what besides hotel work?

DON BAUM: Oh, I worked at the information desk at the University of Chicago, and I worked in a hospital, in the office. I had secretarial skills, you know. Because I'd worked on the newspaper I knew how to type, and I'd taken shorthand or something like that, although I don't remember I ever used that very much. But I'd had some experience, so it all sort of worked out. Then I began to meet, in Hyde Park, a whole group of older artists, including Gertrude Abercrombie and Margot Andreas, who's a close friend of mine—and a lot of people. Then through Gertrude, a lot of other people.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Like. . .

DON BAUM: [Well], I'm trying to think. See, she was very much into. . . One of the things that happened was that I moved into an apartment, a different place. I moved around in Hyde Park, and eventually into an apartment on 57th Street that was right around the corner from where Gertrude

Abercrombie lived.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Was it the Hyde Park Art Colony?

DON BAUM: Well, 57th. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: 57th Street Art Colony.

DON BAUM: No, I knew people who lived there and I went there a lot.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What was it like by that point?

DON BAUM: Well, it was sort of on its last legs, I would say.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's what I thought.

DON BAUM: There weren't really any very good artists _____. There were some curiosities, but it was always a sort of social place for people to meet. Gertrude was very much interested in contemporary music and jazz. And she had gotten to know, early on, a lot of musicians. So almost every Saturday night there was a jam session at her house, and the famous, great people came. I mean, Dizzy [Gillespie—Ed.], and Charlie Parker, and Sarah Vaughn, and, you know, and everyone came to the house. And lots of people who were interested in it, so it was very exciting. And also artists: Emerson Woelffer, Felix Ruvolo, some wonderful photographers. Well, there's Frank. . .

[Tape 1, side B]

DON BAUM: . . . about the sort of social life which I encountered at that time, and which I think was very important for me, to have. . . Well, first of all, most of these people were older than I was, and they were more established, so it was a kind of an opportunity to get an idea of what people were doing, or what they were like, who had sort of gotten there. And also they were very interesting and brilliant and sort of [lively].

SUE ANN KENDALL: This was pretty much at Gertrude's place that all this occurred?

DON BAUM: Yeah, and, you see, there were also a lot of writers involved, and I had elected when I was at the University of Chicago, to take a minor in English, in literature. In fact, I took a number of courses in English literature, on Henry James, and Carlyle. And there was a group of writers in the area that I knew, and so it was a very, very stimulating period for me. I feel like everything kind of opened up there, and I think. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: In the mid forties, is when you're talking about?

DON BAUM: Yeah. And then of course that continued into the early fifties, because I continued to go to school. . . Actually, I didn't really sever my connections (chuckles) with the University of Chicago until about 1950.

SUE ANN KENDALL: How wonderful, though, to have had the [opportunity] to keep going.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and I never finished anything [degrees—Ed.]. I got involved in a number of different thesis projects in the art department. And at that time, it was very heavily a sort of German scholars' program.

SUE ANN KENDALL: When you say "art" you really mean art history, right?

DON BAUM: Art history.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah. The old traditional. . .

DON BAUM: Ulrich Middeldorf was the chairman of the department, and then later Otto von Simpson, and. .

SUE ANN KENDALL: So you had a very solid training. You may not have finished, but you must have been very solid in the old world sense of art history.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right. Well, I loved art history then, and I still do.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, uh huh.

DON BAUM: I mean, it's still a passion of mine to sit down. . . And I have never regretted it. First of all, I've never regretted going to the University of Chicago, because I think that in a sense I did the right thing. I needed to have a certain kind of intellectual development.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Intellectual basis, I would think.

DON BAUM: And I hadn't had it, you know. I went to school in a small town, I went to the Art Institute. But you didn't, none of that happened in those kinds of environments.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. Well, the intellectual atmosphere at the University of Chicago was very stimulating.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and it was really very rich at that particular time. So there were a lot of things going on, and I felt very stimulated by it, and. . . And, too, I worked rather consistently during those years and exhibited and had little shows, and so forth, and sold work. I had a couple of sales at my apartment or something, and people that I'd met came over and they bought things. It's very funny; I sometimes go to someone's house, and I see something I did in 1949, or something like that. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh, there it is.

DON BAUM: . . . which they bought for \$15, you know. I could care less about that, but it's sort of fun to see things. They're like little peas dropped along the trail, I mean, or something like that.
(laughter)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right! I wanted to ask you, you spoke a little bit about your work when you were at the School of Design.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What they asked you to do was fairly practical. You know, meeting some need,
_____ . . .

DON BAUM: Yes, actually in a certain way it's rather curious, because it also had, it was really more of a discipline kind of thing, not too different in approach to the Art Institute, but still involved with this kind of learning of certain types of technical things.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Which you also need to put things together.

DON BAUM: Yeah, but I liked the kinds of ways of thinking and looking at them in a way that I felt

was the new way as compared with the Art Institute's old way.

SUE ANN KENDALL: In work that you did at that time outside of classwork—this is back at the Institute of Design [probably meant School of Design—Ed.]—what were you doing? What kinds of things at that time?

DON BAUM: Well, I was making. . . Well, first of all, they were all essentially images of things: people, events. . . I could show you some of these things if you're. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, well, I was just curious.

DON BAUM: I don't know. Well, Ed [Maser], who was in the art history department at the university, and the director of the Smart Gallery—he's just recently retired—he and I were classmates at the UC in the art history department. And I remember, during that time, I made this drawing of him, which he reminded me of the other night, that he came over to where I lived and I made this drawing of him, which is a very—I think I was very interested in Matisse and—I'm trying to think of what other artists I was specifically sort of interested in. Matisse, I think, was probably one of the first.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Any of the Bauhaus people, European Bauhaus people?

DON BAUM: No. See, I never really was interested in the formalism. I mean, I admired Moholy's work and I admired Mohl Zahn's work, but their work in some ways is so different; they're not. . . Moholy, although, you know, they're formalist, they're also very personal statements. And Mohl Zahn's were even more that way. And even though we saw a lot of other things, it was not. . . See, I still had this background in the Dada, Surrealist area that I'd gotten through Kathleen Blackshear. Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Came from Kathleen then?

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You brought that with you to the School of Design?

DON BAUM: And I still have that, as a very strong sort of background.

SUE ANN KENDALL: How did that tie into Moholy, when he was working with you?

DON BAUM: Well, it wasn't so remote, because of course the Bauhaus had, there'd been a certain kind of flirtation, and some of the people who were connected with it were also involved in some of it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: So there were evidences of that. But, see, I didn't stay there very long either, so it didn't. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah. Then I want to ask you, when you came to the University of Chicago and really studied art history for the first time in any kind of comprehensive way, how did that change your work—or did it?

DON BAUM: In a lot of ways I don't think it really did. I don't remember making rather specific references back and forth. They seemed to be somewhat separated—partly because I had been

working during that period. You know, I just had continued to make things, and so what I was doing seemed appropriate to continue with, but . . . I didn't make any particular connections, although what I was doing I would say was sort of, you know, it might have a little Cubism or Surrealism or, you know, had these vestiges of . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: But studying ancient art or Renaissance or whatever, all of that didn't seem to connect to your own artmaking.

DON BAUM: No, and I didn't feel any real strong . . . The areas that I liked the most were Medieval art, and I liked particularly Romanesque sculpture, and . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, yeah. The architecture too, or mostly sculpture?

DON BAUM: Yes, and the architecture, and then the northern Renaissance painting: [Roger—Ed.] Van der Weyden and Memling, van Eyck. Those were the two areas that I really enjoyed. And I got involved in these thesis topics. The first one which I attempted—and I started it under Middeldorf, and Middeldorf went on leave, I guess, after the first year—was the symbolism of Paul Gauguin.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh! Mmm.

DON BAUM: Well, it was a kind of a disaster in a way, because I had been, and was at that time, and continued for probably four years, in a rather classical psychoanalysis. And so my kind of involvement, as I got into the Gauguin material, was to look at it from that point of view. And of course it began to be quite revelatory. I think, now, in the current literature, there's all kinds of stuff which makes this apparent, that it does add. Well, both Middeldorf and then later von Simpson were just absolutely negative about the whole idea.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Your approaching it that way.

DON BAUM: Yeah. They did not, Middeldorf simply said, "This cannot add anything to art history. It's . . ." And he essentially attempted to discourage me. I had had, fortunately, the support of a very well known psychoanalyst in Chicago, not my doctor, but somebody who was interested in the idea of people who were involved with psychoanalysis working with art and literature. And she was very helpful. So I didn't feel like what I was saying or doing was really off the track. I had begun of course to read Freud, and I had, you know, there were a lot of sort of connections that were going on . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, you were going through the process yourself.

DON BAUM: . . . and I was going through the process myself. Well, when Middeldorf left, then I suddenly was shifted over to Otto von Simpson. Well, von Simpson is a wonderful and brilliant man, and so forth, but he was a Jesuit, and the idea of this psychoanalytic approach to Gauguin was . . . [both break up laughing]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yes.

DON BAUM: I know it was a [riot]. It's so stupid now that I . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: I think it's marvelous, though, the juxtaposition of everything . . . Your psychoanalysis, and his Jesuit background, that's . . .

DON BAUM: But, you know, if I'd any sense I probably would have just realized it, you know, like, "This is not going to work." But I was . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did he try to work with you?

DON BAUM: Not really. I mean they'd. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Or was it just beyond his comprehension?

DON BAUM: Well, they'd go along with me for a while, but then when it came right down to it, they really did not accept any of the theses that, what I was trying to say.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Do you have any of that material that you wrote?

DON BAUM: No, I don't. And I feel sort of badly about it, but somewhere along the line, I just lost all that stuff.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It's fascinating. Yeah, it's too bad.

DON BAUM: Yeah. So then I was really sort of pretty much told that if I wanted to finish this degree that I had to change my topic, and so Middeldorf persuaded me to change my topic from that to the color in Gauguin, Gauguin's color. Where did it come from? _____ some, you know, just your typical art historical topic.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: But I wasn't interested in it at all. Somehow or another, it just seemed sort of remote to me, but I started to work on it, and Middeldorf kept telling me to look at the English wallpaper designs. Well, I think at that point he was really thinking about some of those arts and crafts movement people. I don't really know; I never got into it; I never could figure out what that was all about. (laughter) But I worked on that again for a while, and then I was again sort of up against the wall, and. . . Josh Taylor had come here, and he became my advisor. I think at this point—that must have been in the late forties, about 1948, because I had started to teach. I had a part-time teaching job at Roosevelt that I started in 1948, and then I became a full-time instructor in 1949. But I continued to sort of work on this because I got pressure from Roosevelt University, because all I had was a Ph.B. degree.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You really needed something beyond that.

DON BAUM: I really needed this degree.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah.

DON BAUM: And I had done all the coursework, and I had taken the reading exam, and I had, you know. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: You got that far, right.

DON BAUM: . . . I had everything except this thesis project. And so at that point I again switched my thesis topic to a kind of survey of the history of monotypes. There was nothing.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh my gosh! (chuckles)

DON BAUM: Nobody had ever. . . Well, Gauguin did monotypes.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, yeah.

DON BAUM: You know, and very beautiful.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh yes. But this was a historical look at monotypes _____.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and nobody had done any work on them. There were bits and pieces. Well, I was making monotypes. So, you know, I could always, it always had to tie in. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Ties in, right.

DON BAUM: But I really got very interested in that subject. But in the meantime, I'd gotten, you know, I was a full-time teacher, and the first few years of teaching are very difficult.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sure.

DON BAUM: And I was in analysis and was struggling with that. I was working a lot, and in a sense, for that period, for an artist of my age and with very little. . . I was fairly successful. I mean, I didn't ever make a lot of money, but I sold things and people liked them, and I'd enter exhibitions and get in. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: You weren't getting negative feedback.

DON BAUM: Yeah. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: But you were getting some reinforcement for that, so it was okay.

DON BAUM: So anyway, I just finally abandoned the thesis thing altogether, and I persuaded them at Roosevelt that because I had established myself as an artist that that was sufficient qualification. Well, it was a big issue, but somehow or another—and I still sort of wonder about it, because even then the pressure for degrees was on—but they went along with it. And so. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: You were there a long time, so. . .

DON BAUM: I was there a very long time, that's right. And so they kind of quit, I mean, I just finally went one day, in the early fifties probably, and said, "Look, I'm not going to finish this thing, and here's the way you have to look at it."

SUE ANN KENDALL: Fire me now or take me.

DON BAUM: "If you want me to stay here, I think you have to accept me on my professional qualification as an artist," and I said, "I don't think that that's so unusual. . ."

SUE ANN KENDALL: Because you were basically teaching art, studio classes, weren't you?

DON BAUM: Yeah, but I was also teaching the survey in art history and occasionally an art history class.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I see.

DON BAUM: And I did that almost till the last year; I occasionally taught an art history class. I don't feel like I'm a full-fledged art historian, although I love art history, and. . . Only certain areas really interested me. I did a course on Symbolism just a couple years before I left, and I really loved that because I'd been in Belgium and Holland and I'd seen this work, and nobody around Chicago knew anything about it. In fact, Sue Taylor, who is. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, I know who you mean.

DON BAUM: She was one of my students, and I think I did succeed in transmitting to some extent my fascination with the Symbolists, and she's continued. She's working on a Ph.D. on Emile at Bernard now.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm! And she's writing for the Sun Times now, too, [of Chicago], or I heard that she was going to do that.

DON BAUM: Yeah, yeah. So the thing sort of got itself straightened out. And in the meantime, in the early fifties, I went to Europe for the first time. I went to France, Italy, and Spain, and that was a very significant experience for me.

SUE ANN KENDALL: How so?

DON BAUM: Well, I loved to travel, and I have a great deal of curiosity about what other people, what other lives are like. Being in Paris and sort of seeing the things which I saw then was just terribly important for me. And I came back, it turned out that the airline I went on—one of these cut-rate things—failed, went bankrupt, while I was in Italy or Spain or somewhere. And so I came back to Paris and it was going to be, it took almost a month before I could get another, and I finally got it worked out in another way. But in the meantime I started to work there. I hadn't really intended to do any work, but I got started making some drawings and things. And when I came back I started to paint, and I began to make some paintings that were directly connected with my experience, particularly in Spain and Italy, these sort of. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: They were connected with what? I didn't. . .

DON BAUM: Spain and Italy. You know that catalogue, you have that red [catalogue: Don Baum, Hyde Park Art Center, 1981—Ed.]. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, there's a reproduction of a painting there called Spain, which is the first major thing which I did when I came back.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: And that really ties in directly. I mean, I was fascinated by the intensity of religious feeling and mysticism attached with the. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: In the southern Latin countries, especially.

DON BAUM: Yes, yes, and particularly in Spain, which was very untouristed. And it was a very stimulating and also almost frightening experience to go there, because I didn't speak Spanish, and I didn't know, and 1952 was a difficult time to be there. It was fairly soon after the war, and there weren't a lot of tourists and so on.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's for sure.

DON BAUM: But all of that. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: All the ritual, I mean, the Catholic church is _____ . . .

DON BAUM: Yeah, and see, I didn't know anything about that really.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It wasn't your heritage so you wouldn't have, yeah.

DON BAUM: No, no.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But it is a fascinating. . . They're so literal, a lot of the ritual objects and so on. They _____ . . .

DON BAUM: Yeah, and, you know, I was intrigued by altar pieces and votive things, this kind of fetishism to encounter in that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: That was a very significant experience for me. And then I went back a couple of years later—I think it was in '54—and traveled extensively, again I went around through Spain and France and Italy.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, did you get to the Romanesque churches, I assume.

DON BAUM: I went to a lot of those, because, you know, that's still one of my great loves.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Me too! I didn't realize that.

DON BAUM: It's so interesting.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah. It's one of mine. The whole pilgrimage to St. Jacques de Compostela and all of those on the route.

DON BAUM: Yeah, um hmm, um hmm.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, wonderful. And at that time, I'm sure it was quite a different experience than it is today.

DON BAUM: Yeah, it was. And I haven't. . . Well, the last time I was in Spain—I guess it must be about ten years ago—it seemed different. But when I came back, in the early fifties—or in '54—I was teaching at Roosevelt, and I was using the Art Institute slide collection, because we didn't have a slide collection. I used to go there every day, or almost every other day, and I'd see Kathleen Blackshear, and it was great. And Whitney Halstead was a friend of mine. I knew a lot of artists at that point. Also I had begun to teach at the Hyde Park Art Center, and I met this young woman, Alice Shaddle. We got married in 1955. And we lived on 57th Street in this big fourth-floor walkup apartment that I'd had for a number of years. Within the year, my son was born, and it didn't seem logical at that point to try to live there anymore. We didn't have any money, but succeeded in. . . We found out about this. . . This is very interesting, because my interest in architecture goes back to Michigan State. I had been interested in Wright. When I came to Chicago I knew there were Wright buildings, and I went to see the Robie House, and to see the Oak Park houses. I got interested in Sullivan because of teaching at Roosevelt. And of course this was a sort of package, these two people. So at the time that we decided we would look for a house to live in, it turned out that this Frank Lloyd Wright house, the [George—Ed.] Blossom House, was on the market. It was surprisingly, even though it's a very large house, within our price range—that is, by borrowing money, we could manage it. So we bought this house and we moved in there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I didn't know that.

DON BAUM: And my ex-wife. . . Alice lives there still. So my children, you know, both grew up there. But it was all a part of this early experience. I would never have known much about that if it hadn't been. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: But that goes back to Michigan, that interest?

DON BAUM: Yeah, it goes back to my days at Michigan [State University].

SUE ANN KENDALL: I didn't realize that. I didn't know you had lived there. One question I had too was your work in psychoanalysis. Were you aware of how that affected your work?

DON BAUM: Oh yeah. And I think that's a very important subject, because. . . It so happens that the post-war years—and mine began a little bit earlier—my father died at a certain point in there, and I can't remember when it was. It was probably about 1950, because the reason I went to Europe the first time was because he left me a small bequest, and I just had this money, and I thought, "Well, I'm going to go to Europe." But he was, I hadn't really known him very well. He died a rather long and painful death of cancer. I was troubled by it, and that was really when I started in on this rather severe classical analysis—although I'd gone to a lot of therapists prior to that, sort of trying to resolve things.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So it wasn't until almost. . .

DON BAUM: I think it was about 1950 that I started.

SUE ANN KENDALL: . . .1950 that you actually seriously got into psychoanalysis.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and that's when I think, because it was right after he died. He either died in 1949 or 1950. . . And as soon as I came back. . . In fact, I had seen my doctor prior to his death, and he said, "Look, you know, he may live for months and this is not a good time to start, so we'll wait until afterwards." And I said "Fine." So that's how that all happened to work out that way.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You were in your late twenties at that time, is that right? Mid to late twenties.

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, I was, I think I was 27 when I got married. That was in 19. . . Is that right, 1955? No, I must have been 29. Yeah, I was. [sotto voce:— Ed.] 1922.

SUE ANN KENDALL: '22, right. Let's see, what is that? (laughs) In 1952, you would have been 30, right?

DON BAUM: Oh, I must have been that old.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So then, I was trying to put together when you were _____. _____ your age and psychoanalysis, it meant you were really doing a lot of self-exploration. Death precipitates that.

DON BAUM: And I had met a number of people who were involved—June Leaf, for example, who had also had a lot of analysis and therapy and so forth. We became very good friends in the fifties because she came back to Chicago—or was in Chicago at that time, and finished her degree at Roosevelt, and then went to the School of. . . I guess she then went to the Institute of Design and took a masters there, and then she taught at the School of the Art Institute. We were very close friends. I saw a great deal of her during that period, and we always shared some of our artistic ideas.

She was also a friend of Leon Golub, and it turned out of course that Leon had had, as far as I know, a lot of therapy and went through analysis. And there were some other people. Probably George Cohen. I wouldn't vouch for these things, but. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. It was in the air.

DON BAUM: . . . in the air. I think it was enormously important. There was a lot of conversation about it. There was a lot of writing about it in some of the literary journals. And a lot of, it seemed to sort of be opening up. I feel like a certain kind of methodology that I have about my own work—my dependence on intuition, the sort of experimentation which led to discovering my images in my own work—came directly out of that kind of psychoanalytic experience.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Can you be more specific?

DON BAUM: Well, for instance, I worked primarily in what would still be considered probably experimental mediums—with monoprints and collage, and sometimes even those combined. It wasn't until about 1952 that I began to sort of paint in a way that I felt was sort of related to some of this other, more experimental, work. But it was this dependence upon the accident, upon intuition. It's the Surrealist sort of approach.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Dada or Surrealism?

DON BAUM: But you see, it tied in completely with this investigation that psychoanalysis prompted.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did it justify to you in an intellectual way your approach to your work, or make you aware of it? I mean, it seems to me maybe you were already doing that?

DON BAUM: Yeah, it was supported. And I understood it. But you know, in a Freudian. . . My doctor was essentially a Freudian. I wouldn't say that he was a rigid or strict Freudian, but he was basically that, and he wasn't interested in. . . He never looked at my work once during these many years that I went there. But I talked about it all the time, and it was always kind of a core of. . . Because I recognized the way in which certain things became apparent in my work that were also concerns of mine in my efforts to understand my unconscious—you know, how it functioned, and so forth. So there was a very direct connection with that. And I felt at the time that at least for me, that was as significant an education for an artist as any kind of academic experiences I'd had. I mean, it was the philosophical basis of my work as an artist.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, self-knowledge, in a way.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right, inside.

SUE ANN KENDALL: As a person, as an artist, insight, all of that kind of thing.

DON BAUM: Yeah, yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You had by that point had the art historical background, to a certain extent at least, and then you were adding another whole dimension, it seems to me.

DON BAUM: Right. And you see, I'd been interested in this whole Gauguin thing, and, you know, it just went. The whole kind of came together. And June was very much involved in somewhat the same way. And so we talked and talked about this kind of stuff. As I said, there were other people around that were experiencing the same thing.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You seemed to—from what you say, you really were very aware of the role this was playing in your work at the time.

DON BAUM: Yeah, I felt that there was a very direct connection.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, so sorting that out didn't take away. I mean, sometimes they get it all sorted out, then there's nothing left for the art. There's nothing left to put into the art. That doesn't seem to be the case with you.

DON BAUM: No, it wasn't. And I was saying last night, I had some friends here. [pounding on something—Ed.] Sue Taylor, in fact, was here with Chris Lyon and his wife Debra [Pearlman—Ed.]. . . Oh, she has another name because she's also a painter. It was a sort of an accident. We were supposed to go to her [Sue Taylor's—DB], house for dinner, and then at the last

[Tape 2, Side A]

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, I think what I was saying, too, was that it has to do with the fact that I had, without really thinking about it, begun to work almost entirely within these kind of experimental techniques, particularly collage. And with collage, I would feel that, as I was working, that I had whatever I needed in my environment and in my studio, and that it was just there. It was a matter of at some point just seeing and recognizing it: "Oh, that's exactly what I need!" And part of that has to do with the whole idea of the transformation of objects that. . . Well, I always think about this statement that Picasso made about that bull's head, which is made from a bicycle seat and handle bars. He said, "Someday, you know, it'll be on a trash pile, and someone'll come along, and say, "That's just what I need for my bicycle." Well, that point of view I think is something which has always interested me.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And Breton too, I should think.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: The sewing machine and umbrella, that statement.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And I felt really related to the—that's a Surrealist point of view in way—and that whole idea.

SUE ANN KENDALL: At what point did you—first of all you, and then others in Chicago—become aware of what was going on in New York? And what kind of an influence was that, if any?

DON BAUM: Well, I had begun to go to New York in the [fifties—DB]. I guess I'd gone to New York before I went to Europe the first time. I had a good friend that lived there and I went and spent some. . . I think the first summer after I taught. That's possible. Because I ran out of money, and I had to get a job, and I sold underwear at Saks, 34th Street. [laughter] It was a dreary job.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I think a history of your jobs would be fascinating. [more laughter]

DON BAUM: The hundreds of them. And I really became aware. . . Well, I was interested in. . . I do not have, even though I feel that I am myself an artist who's involved in images and so on, I do not have any feelings that pure, more formal approaches are something which are remote from me at all. I recall, for example, just some. . . Well, I remember a show that Katharine Kuh did at the Art Institute, a Rothko show. [I remember] it was the first time Rothko really had been seen here, and there were about ten of them in this tiny gallery. I was so impressed by it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: When was that?

DON BAUM: Well, it must have been in the early fifties. Yeah, she was there. And she, Katharine Kuh, was a very open person, and she was very nice to me. In fact, the first show I had in New York was at the Ruth White Gallery, with another Chicago artist named Regina Kirschner. And that was partly due to my connection with Katharine Kuh. She knew Ruth White and. . . Anyway, it wasn't a terrifically successful venture, but it was a good thing for me to have experienced. But, you see, I felt about Abstract Expressionism that in many ways the points of view that were being expressed were not dissimilar because it was the same dependence on intuition, and same belief in the accident, and all of this kind of Surrealist background.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's what I wondered, yeah. You tied into that.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And so I have a very strong kind of feeling, sympathetic feeling, and interest in the art of that particular time—although I felt that it was very dissimilar from anything which I would probably ever do or express. I didn't feel drawn to it in that way. And I never have rejected formal art at all, because, I mean, to see a great Mondrian is fabulous to me. But I think that's partly because I studied art history and I have an appreciation for, you know, a very broad spectrum of artists' representations. I didn't have any need to reject it, whereas later on in the sixties, you know, with the Hairy Who groups, and some of these other artists, I think they had rather definite feelings about a kind of rejection of New York. I didn't experience that in that way. And even though I felt more akin to what they were doing, I still didn't feel it was necessary to deprive myself, in a sense, of. . . It's like, I had never had any Renaissance art or Baroque art at the School of the Art Institute in the survey class—which was an ancient to modern sort of thing—because it was just left out.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's peculiar.

DON BAUM: Because Kathleen Blackshear didn't like it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, she didn't like it, I see.

DON BAUM: So there wasn't, and so I had never. . . Then I did have the opportunity when I was at the university to not only study that, but really get into it. And I enjoyed it enormously. I loved, I mean, I went to Rome once just to look at the Baroque churches and things of that kind. So I feel capable of responding to a very large variety of _____.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. Were you aware, though, in the late forties, of what was going on in New York, since Abstract Expressionism at that time wasn't codified so to speak—they weren't talking about Jackson Pollock and his analysis yet, all of that.

DON BAUM: Right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you sense the connection, or did you know some of the people that were there? And did you sense a connection with that _____.

DON BAUM: I never knew any of them, but I. . . I was in about three or four of the Momentum shows. They brought all these people—Motherwell came here once.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: And I remember going out for a drink with Motherwell after a jurying session or something, and I was very impressed by him. There were contacts of that kind. And I did know the

work, and was very moved by it, even then, although I can't remember specifics.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right. But there was no one here who was really doing that kind of work.

DON BAUM: No, there really wasn't.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Was there much talk about it? I mean, I suppose at that point one was not so aware that it going to be the movement of that decade, but. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah. I think there was. Because, you see, these Momentum people made great efforts to get people from the East particularly—Betty Parsons, Joseph Albers, and Motherwell. I was trying to think who some of the other people were. But they came here and, you know. . . Momentum was so kind of exciting and important, I think, for Chicago artists who participated in it, that we always wanted to know who the jurors were. Then we sort of made connections about, found out about really what sort of things they actually did. I don't think I was influenced by it in any way, except that I felt somewhat akin to their process, and I liked it. I mean, I liked the energy, and the scale, and all of these things, and it seemed very new to me. Of course, it was all prior to the sort of thing that we now think of as Chicago art, you know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: There were, you know, artists who were attempting to work in that way. As a matter of fact—now, I should take that back—the year, the first two years—I got married in I think 1955, and the first two years that I was married I was still painting and I was painting really what were sort of Abstract Expressionist paintings, although they were portraits.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Really? Uh huh.

DON BAUM: Which many of them did. You know, at a certain point, there were portraits that were done. Anyway, I made those things. And then I began to get increasingly dissatisfied with the limitations of paint and canvas. It didn't, it really didn't satisfy my needs to sort of discover my images in this more intuitive way. There was something just too physically involving in the process. So I began to make collages, and then they in turn. . . And my wife was also very much interested in collage, so we felt very akin in our work. I began to make three-dimensional objects of found materials.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Was she too doing that? I don't know her work.

DON BAUM: Yes. In fact, a lot of her early work. . . But you see, she had the much more traditional kind of experience at the School of the Art Institute and was, for instance, very much involved in printmaking—and painting. But she also made collages. And today, of course, her work is very directly related to collage and to this kind of made objects.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But so, was that when you really started getting into the three-dimensional collages?

DON BAUM: Yeah. And I began to put things into the surface of the painting too. I put newspapers and cloth and I made things out of, I sewed cloth onto canvases, and things like that. So it was the desire to escape from the tradition of painting as it normally is employed, and to find other ways, other beings.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Were you selling much at that point?

DON BAUM: Yeah. I've sold, you know, off and on throughout my life.

SUE ANN KENDALL: All the time, _____.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Not vast quantities and never for very much money, but . . . (chuckles)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you ever want to not have to teach and just do your art?

DON BAUM: No, I never thought much about it. First of all, by that time, we had two children, I guess, or we had one, and then two. Maria is five years younger than Charles. And we had this big house, and it was an enormous responsibility.

SUE ANN KENDALL: (chuckles) Yes.

DON BAUM: And so it was necessary to work. I not only taught full time, but I also often. . . I taught at the Hyde Park Art Center, and for a while I taught at a senior citizen's group at the Bernard Horwich Center, a course on modern art. I did one of these Ford Foundation discussion groups on modern art that Katharine Kuh had been very much involved in organizing. Hayakawa had this group, and then he left, and then I took it on the second year. It was very interesting. But I did a lot of things that were connected. But teaching always was—and I could say that with no problem at all—a very important thing for me to do. I felt very good about it. I loved the context. I loved seeing, you know, what people did. It was not anything which I ever felt. . . I never felt the desire particularly to not do that and to just paint. I always did both of them. I mean, I somehow had this sort of, I had some kind of. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: It sounds somehow that it gives you energy.

DON BAUM: Yeah, it did _____, I think.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It doesn't drain you.

DON BAUM: I think it did give me energy. And I didn't teach in the summer, so I'd have that. I had all these vacations, so it worked out pretty well. It got hairy at a certain point, because Alice also wanted to teach, and we needed the income. So she also taught. She taught at Roosevelt. She also taught at the Hyde Park Art Center. And it turned into a kind of a nightmare because we were on these shifts.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Too much.

DON BAUM: There was just too many things going on, and I don't think it was a healthy thing for our relationship, but, anyway, that's what we did for quite a long time. Just to sort of make ends meet, you know. To have a car. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, when you have kids and all those responsibilities and the house and each going your own direction, it's tough.

DON BAUM: So it got quite difficult. So that, and then of course, in 19, I guess it was in about 1970, we were divorced.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: Then I didn't work for quite a long time because I didn't have anyplace to work, and on

weekends I saw my kids, and I taught during the day, and I had _____ . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, it's a difficult period.

DON BAUM: Yeah. I think it's the usual sort of problems.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Unfortunately, many of us have been there.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Most unfortunate. And I forget the date now, but in the late fifties you really got more involved with the Hyde Park Art Center.

DON BAUM: Yeah. I started to teach there in about 1952 or '53. I think it was. . . I'll bet it was before. . . Well, it was at least at that time, because when I went to Europe in 1954, the ladies in my class gave me this passport case, and I sort of date it from that particular time. The Art Center had been here on 57th Street in a storefront, and had been in several such places, and it was really sort of a ladies's club for the faculty wives and so on. They made watercolors. And I taught this class. But it didn't really have an exhibition program. Then they moved. They got a new director and they moved over to the old department store on 57th Street, and that's—or on 55th Street—and that was where I began to do exhibitions. We really had a gallery, and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. Doing the curating. Before we get into the real specifics of your curating there, it would appear from the amount of curating that you did, that it took an enormous amount of energy, along with your teaching and everything else. Did you, I mean, I've already asked you about the teaching, but did you sometimes feel that you didn't have time to get to your art, and simply couldn't produce as much, or was that really how you wanted things at that point?

DON BAUM: Well, it didn't seem to interfere. I mean, I continued to work all through that period, and to show—I showed in shows at the Art Center. And I had things in other places and I had exhibitions. . . I mean, it didn't really seem to interfere. I hadn't, now that I think about it, I had boundless energy. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: I was going to say, the amount of creative energy that you put out through those years amazes me, and that's what I wanted to ask you. But you did manage to keep going in terms of the artwork that you wanted to do.

DON BAUM: Yeah. It was hard at times, and I didn't produce as much as I would have liked to. But I have, my methods are. . . I mean, I'm not a going-into-the-studio-every-morning-and-working. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: You don't work nine to five?

DON BAUM: I am no nine-to-fiver at all. And there are periods when I don't work at all. I mean, when I just came back from Indonesia, I felt somehow filled with some kind of new information—I didn't quite know what to do with it—and nothing seemed very right to me about working. I tried to work, and then I just quit. I thought, "Well, you know, it's just, you're not ready for it." Then, about a couple weeks ago, I started again just fine.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You started again. It seems you respect your intuitions, and your needs.

DON BAUM: Well I, yeah, I've learned that there's no point in trying to force it. It doesn't function, so I don't do that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Back to, again before we get more into the Hyde Park Center and so on, back to the fifties. Was Katharine Kuh a major influence on you, or how well did you know her?

DON BAUM: I knew her pretty well. See, that was beginning to be towards the end of her work at the Art Institute. And I met her actually through Gertrude. She was the one that asked me to do this Ford Foundation thing, and she was the one that helped me with this show in New York. There were some problems with that, and she just stepped right in. I would see her from time to time. We did a TV show together once, on some works of art that we particularly admired. I had a painting by Delfino Garcia, a Mexican painter, a wonderful thing which I no longer have—he was a very kind of interesting guy. And she had a little Lachaise, and we sat on this TV program and talked about these things. It was fun. I liked her enormously. She was so bright, and so—at least for that period—I think very well informed in a sort of art historical way. That was important to me. Then Fred Sweet, who was the curator of twentieth century art. . . I think Katharine Kuh. . . Maybe he was the curator of American art and she was twentieth century, or something like that. But at that time, I almost always got into the Chicago show, Chicago and Vicinity show, and I was in the American show twice, and that was really through Fred Sweet who was the curator of American art. So I was establishing myself as an artist in a way that I felt very comfortable about.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It seems like you were accepted both by the establishment—meaning the Art Institute, which represented conservatism here, certainly earlier on. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: . . .and also by—your work in Hyde Park—I guess I would say, the more radical side of the art world here.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So you managed to keep both of those sides going in a way that. . . I'm thinking of the earlier people here who reacted so violently against the Art Institute, such as the Weisenborn crowd and all of those things that they did.

DON BAUM: Yeah, well see, I knew about that, and I belonged to a couple of organizations which were always getting petitions or something of that sort, but it didn't. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Which ones, do you remember?

DON BAUM: Well, the Artists' League of the Midwest. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: When was that formed? I don't know about that.

DON BAUM: Well, that must have been in the forties, and I don't remember. . . I have some catalogues and stuff from that group, but they showed around in different places, and they were a lot of these established Chicago artists, most of them much older than I. And so. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: No-Jury was long dead by that point, anyway, wasn't _____ exhibitions?

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, there was one big No-Jury show at Navy Pier, and I was in that. But I think that was considerably later. But there were some No-Jury shows. And of course then the Momentum shows, which were a reaction against the Art Institute, those things came along and they were [very good]. I felt that—and I still feel this way, even though the art world in Chicago, or

probably any other major city, is so complex because it's made up of not only artists, but of people who are involved with art in other ways: museum people, critics. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Dealers.

DON BAUM: . . .dealers, you know, and the whole thing. I always was sort of interested in the whole thing and not in myself and how I was going to get there necessarily but, you know, what the whole thing was really sort of constructed of.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, the whole context.

DON BAUM: And I knew, just accidentally probably, I began to know people from all of these different levels of. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you know the critic Bulliet at all?

DON BAUM: No, but I remember reading them and also Eleanor Jewett, you know, who was the. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. Was she still around?

DON BAUM: Yeah, she was around during the early years. I think she may have reviewed a show or two that I was in.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh, because Bulliet died early fifties, I think '51, and. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah, and she was out of it by the fifties, I think.

SUE ANN KENDALL: By then too, right.

DON BAUM: And then of course, there was a whole new breed of people, but, that. . . I wanted to go back for just a minute, because I think that there's something that I didn't say that I still feel was important, which is that this experience of taking literature classes at the University of Chicago was important, but it actually begins earlier than that, because when I was at Michigan State, I happened to have a very fine teacher in that area. I got very excited about writing at that time, and I began to write short stories and poems and so forth. In fact I submitted a short story to the New Yorker magazine that I wrote when I was at Michigan State University, and they returned it to me, sort of suggesting I rework it, and maybe resubmit it. Well, I never did it, but anyway it was a very encouraging. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: But it wasn't a flat rejection then.

DON BAUM: It wasn't a rejection.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's marvelous!

DON BAUM: And so I continued to write. I can't do it at all at this point. It's sort of interesting; I don't want to do it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Really.

DON BAUM: But I did continue to do it. But it also was the contacts which I had with writers: Wendell Wilcox, who lived on 57th Street and was a very, I think, informative person—very, very widely read and an interest in sort of curious literature. Anyway, it stimulated me, and I always read,

and have for all my life. I'm primarily interested in fiction, and I'm primarily interested—I mean, I've read a lot of earlier writers—but I'm primarily interested in contemporary fiction or twentieth century fiction. Some people have been especially significant to me, among them, among whom was Djuna Barnes, whose book *Night Wood*, you may have known. But I staggered into Djuna Barnes in the early fifties, and felt akin to the point of view and imagery and so on. Well, I had become familiar with Gertrude Stein and James Joyce and had read some of both of them, but Djuna Barnes seemed to me to be much more, someone that was much more available—to me. [probably meant accessible — Ed.] And in fact I made, you know, some works which were directly related to that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh really.

DON BAUM: To her and to that particular book. And then over the years that's been something. . . I feel as perhaps influenced in some ways by certain kinds of literary—not that the work is illustrative of that, but that it comes from some sort of awareness of certain writers and attitudes which are expressive. It still is very important to me.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What other people have you read?

DON BAUM: Oh, I read very widely. But it is primarily fiction, and I like all the. . . I'm just trying to think of. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Like through the sixties, was there anybody in particular you were reading then?

DON BAUM: Well, yes, there were a lot of them. See, I read almost all of James, and I read most of. . . And some of that. . . That was probably earlier, because that must have been when I was really involved at the University of Chicago. [thoughtful pause] Isn't that funny, I can't think. Taos, I keep thinking, he lived in Taos. . . American writer, beard. . . [D. H. Lawrence—Ed.] I don't think anybody reads him now. Well, if. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: What about now? What do you read now?

DON BAUM: Oh, just all sorts of things, mostly contemporary writing, Iris Murdoch, and some of the. . . I like the Australian writers, I like Patrick White, and some of those people. I can't think about that, and I don't know why I really want to go back and bring it up, but it's such a constant and ongoing source of pleasure, and I think. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: When did you stop writing yourself? You said you don't do it now at all. Did you do it beyond Michigan and the University of Chicago? Or did you not write at all at the University of Chicago?

DON BAUM: Well, I think when I went to the University of Chicago, my interests were directed outward, and also I shared an apartment with the fellow who was in the English department and was a writer.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Ah hah.

DON BAUM: And I think, and it was very stimulating, but I think that it made it sort of, I mean, I read all that time, but I had no real desire to write anything, because I was constantly hearing about his writing and his efforts at that, so it just became a secondary. . . And now, for some reason, Richard Loving recently asked me to write something for this artists' writing thing that he's doing, and I said maybe. But then I started to write something and I just got, you know, it's just not there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Just, you can't do it all.

DON BAUM: No. And I don't care really. I mean, it's just. . . If it were easy, as it once was, I think I'd probably be still involved in it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sure.

[Interruption in taping]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Are there other things that you would like to talk about, in general, before we go on to a later period?

DON BAUM: Well, I think so. One of them is that I really have this kind—have had for a long time—an intense curiosity about creativity, and about creative people. I always feel like there's something to learn from them, and something which. . . I guess I felt enriched by knowing them. I think that led me into this curatorial role, which I finally got very involved in, because. . . I think I was ready at a certain point to function in that particular way, because I'd had so many experiences with people in different art forms: musicians and painters and sculptors—and writers. So that I must have felt like I had. . . I didn't—no way consciously—think about the fact that I had a kind of insight into visual arts of other people, but I think eventually that came out, and it was about this sort of curiosity. I'm very intrigued by, well, the uniqueness and the innovation which I feel is what is important in a work of art. Whether it's an image or not an image, that doesn't. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: Or what kind of a work, but that. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: How it's manifested isn't the question, right.

DON BAUM: Yeah, isn't important; it's about this sort of special uniqueness which artists express.

[Tape 2, side B]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Does that curiosity go back to anything, anyone else in your family when you were growing up, who had the same kind of interest?

DON BAUM: [pauses, thinking]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Or just you?

DON BAUM: I don't. . . Yeah. I don't make any connections with that. Neither of my brothers have any real interest nor insight into—certainly not into my work, and not in general. Of course they've spent their lives in a relatively small town and they've been, I would say, in the business world, in a sense. And my sister [Lucy Spriggs—DB], who is as I mentioned to you earlier ten years younger than I am, she was very important to me but in a different way.

[Interruption to answer telephone]

DON BAUM: My parents at the time that she was born, I think. . . See, she was born ten years after I was, and I think it was just a typical example of one of these late-life babies then. They were at their sort of prime, and they were very social and loved to entertain and go out and so forth. Anyway, I have a good deal of experience helping to raise this young child; I mean, I was very interested. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, ten years older, sure.

DON BAUM: . . .I was ten years old, and so forth. We have a very established relationship and she's very, of my family, the one I would say that's sort of sympathetic to me. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Kindred spirit.

DON BAUM: . . .and understands, you know, what I'm doing and she always looks at my work and it's been a very important thing. Because she, you know, left this small town, as I did, and has lived in Oberlin, where she went to school. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh yeah.

DON BAUM: . . .and to Ann Arbor, which is where she lives now. Her husband is an administrator in the school, and she's a teacher. She went back to school and got her teaching degree. She was interested in music when she first went to Oberlin, which was on my suggestion. Anyway, so that's been a . . . I have this uncle who was a painter in Ravenna, Ohio, and he was quite established there. And I went to visit them several times, because I was very curious about it, but I never liked the work. He was a landscape painter, and I just never had any sort of feelings of connection with him. So I didn't, among my family I didn't feel like I ever really had any special connections or feelings

_____.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Were your parents involved in cultural things? You had this intense curiosity about a lot of different cultural things, and I wondered if that came from [them].

DON BAUM: Well, that all actually, I think, emerged later. Because there wasn't anything.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, that's true.

DON BAUM: You know, that was the point; there just wasn't anything there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And they may not have had time in their lives.

DON BAUM: No.

SUE ANN KENDALL: They were probably struggling to just exist.

DON BAUM: There wasn't very much. When I left Escanaba when I was eighteen and went to Michigan State, I pretty much knew that I was not coming back there. I was very anxious to go to a city.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sounds like me.

DON BAUM: When I got to Chicago, I thought, "This is where I want to be. I want to live in Chicago, and I'm going to try to be an artist, and I'm going to go to school, and I'm going to do this and this and this.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And you've done it.

DON BAUM: And then it all happened, yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh, well, they say if you set out to do it, you can do it, so that's wonderful.

DATE: MAY 13, 1986

[Tape 3, side A]

DON BAUM: Well, we were going to talk about my work, right?

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah. I was going to ask you. . . It seems like you're both a finder and a maker, in the sense that you use a lot of—or have in the past, certainly—used a lot of objects that you find.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Were you fascinated with objects and trinkets and so on as a child?

DON BAUM: (pauses) Yes. No one has ever asked me that question before, but it's absolutely true. (laughter)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm! What kind of things did you collect?

DON BAUM: Well, I can't. . . Various sorts of things come to mind, but I do remember that even as a young child I was always very interested in curious and small discarded objects, I guess, of various sorts. So that's been a preoccupation of mine. I haven't really thought about it, but throughout my life I realize that I've enjoyed. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you like collect shells or things like that?

DON BAUM: Well, actually I don't remember thinking about it as collecting. I mean, I had a stamp collection, but that was, you know, that's so typical of a teenager, I think, to have that. But the other kinds of things I didn't really. . . I mean, I guess I thought of it more as being these sort of treasures that were usually unique objects of one sort or [another—Ed.]. Well, shall I tell you an anecdote?

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sure.

DON BAUM: Which is very funny. . . One Easter—I must have been about ten years old—but we always got Easter baskets and eggs and things. Anyway, one of these colored eggs which I got in my Easter basket one year had a stencil on it of a crucified Jesus—a purple stencil on it. And I think the egg was pink; I can't remember, but anyway I just fell madly in love with this object. And I kept it for a very long time, I mean, maybe a matter of a couple of years. And my brother, my oldest brother, in one of our frequent controversies (chuckles) picked it up and threw it out the window and destroyed it. (laughter) Well, it was, I mean, it must have been a traumatic experience or something. I don't even know why at this point; I've never thought about it, really, until recently. But that's the sort of object that I seem to have attached almost a rather obsessional maybe even fetishistic sort of connection with. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: And he realized that. He _____.

DON BAUM: He realized it. It was a deliberate selection on his part, I felt very sure. But there were all kinds of things like that, and I think, especially after I came to Chicago to live, and where I had a kind of a permanent sort of residence—one apartment after another, but they were permanent—I just kept adding to this sort of acquisition, all sorts of things.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Large things? Or small things?

DON BAUM: Well, mostly smaller things. I was very interested in Victorian objects, but they were usually small things—iron stoneware, and things of that sort. This is very funny. I haven't thought about this for such a long time, but I know that every time I moved I kept being appalled by the amount of debris that I had accumulated. But you see I didn't really. . . I worked with collage from, oh, in that resume, that first. . . [searching for paper—Ed.] Oh, here. Maybe it's in this.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Here's the resume.

DON BAUM: Yeah. In 1952, I had an exhibition in Chicago at The 750 Studio, which is long defunct, and it was a kind of off-the-beaten path place, sort of a semi-basement. And this woman, Ginger Ellis, who had started this, was just one of these people who felt the need to show artists' work that she liked, and I had no particular reputation there, but anyway she gave me this exhibition and I worked towards it. It was all collages. And I think it was the first time I felt like I'd really had a show that meant something. But I had begun to use collage of all sorts. I often altered papers, in one way or another. And at that time I was also making monotypes, so I often made monotypes and then cut them up and used them in these collages. Most of them were quite small, but some of them had as sort of adjuncts to them Victorian frames that functioned as a part of the work. I remember, for example, there were two pieces. . . I have these, in fact I still have these two frames; I somehow can't—see that's an example of this collecting—I can't. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Can't get rid of them.

DON BAUM: Can't get rid of them, because they're too important in some way. (chuckles) But one of them had a burnt wood oval frame. It's set into an old Victorian frame that had acorns all around the edge that was very nice—is very nice—and then inside, where the picture would have been, there was a deep box, and in that was the works of a clock. So I had begun to make these somewhat three-dimensional objects, but I still didn't think about them as being three-dimensional, really; they were just a kind of an extension of collage. And after I went to Spain—the first time, or to Europe and particularly I think Spain was impressive for me—I came back and worked on these large paintings, like the one which I referred to earlier, the one called Spain, and then there were a whole series of things in which I kept adding materials to the surface of the canvas. I'd put newspaper down and then paint over it, and more newspaper, and I built up these very rich, rough surfaces. I think it's sort of interesting because of some of the other kinds of things that people were doing at the time. Leon's [Golub—DB] paintings were already beginning to have this very rich surface texture. I don't know, it was something that was kind of. . . I didn't feel it at the time, but now in retrospect, it seems like there must have been some sort of effort to make the surface of the painting have a kind of validity of its own.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Of its own, yeah.

DON BAUM: And that's interesting, because last night I went to this panel discussion—three of the former Hyde Park Art Center artists, Ray Yoshida, Christina Ramberg, and Phil Hanson—and they spoke at a panel last night at the Contemporary Museum. And they felt that their students had become much more interested in the surfaces of their works. And, you know, it was a kind of curious coincidence to think about that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: But anyway, I began at that time to feel very dissatisfied with the surface, the flatness of the. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Just a plain painted surface.

DON BAUM: Yeah. . . So I started to make these three-dimensional assemblages. And I had this studio in the coachhouse of the house where Alice and I lived, so I had just unlimited space to collect and keep.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. Do you collect fragments of things?

DON BAUM: Oh yeah. Mostly. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you do it as a child too? Were you attracted to fragments of things as well? Just any kind of objects?

DON BAUM: It's very funny. I have a kind of block about all that, I guess, because, you see, as a young person I had almost no contact with anything that resembled works of art, I mean. . . I took art in high school, but we made puppets. I don't remember much about it. I don't remember knowing anything about modern art or anything like that until I left there and went to Michigan State University. So that whatever it was that intrigued me at that time, it was very hit or miss, and I don't really remember what the things were.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Do you know what it was, for instance, about the Easter egg that you liked? Was it the visual or was it the crucifixion?

DON BAUM: Well, I think it was a combination of things. First of all, I think it had a kind of an air of mystery for me, and part of that was because of the image. You know, I have no particular religious affiliations at this particular time in my life, and at that time I didn't really either. I went to the Presbyterian church, because that's where we were sent as children. And I found it very cold and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Dry.

DON BAUM: . . .dry, and I never felt any connection with the legends or any aspect of it in particular. But I think even then I was very fascinated by what I felt was a sort of exoticism of Catholicism. And this town where I grew up was about half French and Irish-Catholic and about half Scandinavian. It was settled by these two groups.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Very different groups.

DON BAUM: And there were large, very large Catholic churches, several Catholic schools in this town. And many of my friends, you know, were Catholic. And I remember going to midnight mass when I was in high school. There were some things of that sort, you know. I was very interested in that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Part of the ritual was intriguing.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and I think. . . You see, later I think these same kinds of feelings surfaced, for example in Spain, and also in Italy. . . And in France. But where I suddenly felt very convinced by the fact that, not that Jesus lives or anything of that sort, but that the sort of needs that people have—have had—for this kind of higher power, and that, as a result of this, you see this kind of incredible creativity that must result in this sort of thing. Anyway, it really interested me. I felt, you know, that seeing, as I did for the first time, the great Gothic and Romanesque churches, and so on, I just found it fascinating that there had been, at least, a culture in which these things could be produced. It seems very special to me. So I think that whole thing kind of surfaced again. In fact, when I came

back after that, I began to make some shrine-like objects. And I was very much interested in things like votive objects [and reliquaries—DB]. I bought in Spain these wax limbs [legs, arms, noses, etc.—DB] and other objects which you could buy and, you know, have them blessed and give them to the church, and so forth. But I brought a number of those things back and used them in constructions, over the years. So it's been a sort of an undercurrent in my work, and I don't know what that means exactly, but. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, it ties into Surrealism.

DON BAUM: Yeah, it ties into Surrealism. And you see, it was a kind of an exotic thing for me; it isn't about the religious content, particularly.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right.

DON BAUM: But on the other hand, of course, when I went to the University of Chicago, I became even more intensely interested because I studied art history and took courses in iconography and began to really be aware of how complex and how fascinating—how rich—this source of material had been historically, and really could still be, and I felt it still had this sort of vitality and energy. But anyway, to go back to what I was saying, this business about being dissatisfied with surface was really kind of a crisis, in a way, and I felt, after I started to work with three-dimensional objects, I felt very free. It was a real breakthrough, in a sense. I think I sort of wanted to do that for some time, and it was real important. Anyway, from then on, I made things. . . I used to collect things from all kinds of sources: natural materials, which I have always been very much interested in. I used to spend part of my summers up, of course, on Lake Superior, so I'd pick up wood and weathered this or that. But I also went to junk stores. All the time. And that's, of course, something which is very characteristic of a lot of Chicago artists. A lot of their life has been spent in Maxwell Street on Sunday mornings. (laughs) And I wouldn't have anything particularly in mind when I started out, but I'd often find things that would be useful to me. And they could be made out of almost any material. I guess even then, though, I was very unwilling to use plastic, but there was still, you know, at that point there were still things made out of wood and metal and glass.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You're talking about the fifties now.

DON BAUM: Yeah. So plastic didn't have the kind of problems that it does in. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, right, the proliferation of plastic was a little later.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And no, of course, it's more prevalent than anything else. So you went from that show in '52 into doing pretty much three-dimensional, more three-dimensional things.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And for a long time I incorporated surfaces which I created. I got very much interested in rubbings. Once when I was in Paris, I did a whole series of collages that were made from rubbings from the Jardin des Plantes, particularly of ginko trees, but some exotic—rather, relatively exotic—sorts of trees. And then combined those with some 19th century engravings. You see, at that time, I was aware, I think, of [Max—DB] Ernst, and I've. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Montage and. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah, and I knew, because I had gone to the school of the Art Institute, and I knew, you know, the sort of importance of these experimental techniques—and I was using them. But I just

continued to work with these things. I made a lot of pieces at that time that are kind of architectural in character. It's odd, but I think of them now in relation to my work at the present time, as being closer. They were mostly made of wood, and they were often kind of free-standing, sometimes including some element of imagery, but at times even being very dependent upon the materials themselves. They were not—again, in retrospect—I feel like. . . I just didn't realized what I was doing, but I think they were very good. But I destroyed most of them. Because nobody was interested in them. (chuckles) You know, they were like not _____ . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Just not important.

DON BAUM: Yeah. So . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Do have any?

DON BAUM: No, I don't have any. Fortunately, I have slides of most of them, but most of them are gone.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I'd like to see them sometime. They were just kind of experiments, though, in other words.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You looked at them more as experiments than as . . .

DON BAUM: Well, I didn't feel they were experiments, but I just felt like I had to make them. I made quite a few three-dimensional kinds of sculpture objects which were made out of rolling pins, these wooden potato mashers, and objects of that kind that . . . Well, I think they're very interesting, and I still have slides of some of those, but I don't have any of the work and I don't think. . . Very little of it is around. There's a few things that people that I knew at that time acquired, but there's very little. . . Well, just for an example in relation to material. . . Oh, I know. Okay, what happened there is that I then began to get interested in using dolls.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I was going to ask you about the dolls next.

DON BAUM: And in things. And I think the first piece I ever made, and the name of the piece—which as far as I know still exists—was The First Doll, and it was a very funny kind of combination of circumstances. But when my son Charles was about three, maybe, Alice and I and June Leaf went to Washington, D.C. And some friends of ours, the Claviers, were living in Chicago at that time, and they stayed in our apartment, took care of Charles, and loaned us their car—well, I can't believe it now. (laughs) How anyone could be so generous. But it was great. And we went to Washington. Well, we wanted to bring something back for Charles, and we happened to be going by this doll store. I had never even seen a doll store, you know, antique dolls and so on, and we went in and there was this marvelous boy doll—this credible papier-mache head—and it was very wonderful. So I bought it and brought it back to him. He was little and he liked it, and it was fun. But somehow, over the years, that thing got sort of wrecked, but the head was wonderful, and there was still enough of the body—I don't think there were arms and legs left. Anyway, that was the first doll that I ever used, that particular one, and that was in this construction, which was in a box—it was rather brilliant in color. And it had a lot of painted areas and a few other things in it. But from then on, I began to work with dolls, and I did lots of different sorts of things. I think my feelings about it are somewhat similar to this. . . Well, it certainly relates to this kind of fascination with religion as a sort of a myth or an exotic mythology. And dolls began to have similar kind of meaning because

obviously they represent human beings. In a sense, there's a kind of potential manipulation—or not necessarily—well, that word is all right—but it is possible for dolls to have this kind of special sort of psychological significance. I didn't really think about what this psycho. . .you know, what it would be in relation to one or another, but I certainly consciously was dealing with relationships between human beings, by using kind of fetishistic objects.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, children do that, and I'm wondering if your children playing with dolls had anything to do with it. Those dolls become very real to them.

DON BAUM: Yeah. I don't recall that. Charles was really not especially interested in toys or dolls of that kind. He's very much interested in cars and tractors and things of that sort. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: The typical boy things.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and Maria, you know, I don't remember much about that either. I know that I bought her dolls because I thought it was very important. (laughter)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Maybe they were bought for you more than for her.

DON BAUM: Yeah, very possible. But, you know, I think one of the things which I should talk about in relation to my work, and especially as I start talking about that aspect of it, is that when I started at the University of Chicago in about 1944, my father died. And he died fairly young. . . Actually took a long time, but it was a very traumatic experience for me. I was already teaching at Roosevelt. I had just started to teach there, and I felt very troubled by this. I decided that I should do something rather seriously about it in terms of some kind of therapy or psychoanalysis or something. I had been very aware of that. I don't quite know how it happened, but just in terms of people that I met, I had made several efforts to engage myself in some kind of searching in that particular way. But nothing had panned out. Well, at this particular time, I'm not absolutely certain how I ever encountered the doctor that I did, but anyway, his name is Morris Sklansky. He's still practicing in Chicago. And I started seeing him on a very frequent basis. I think I went four days a week when I started, and I went off and on to him for about three years. Very regularly. Fortunately at that time, it was, I think, even part of the beginning may have been in a clinic situation, because he's about the same age as I am, and he was probably very young. . . In any case, it was just something which I felt was absolutely necessary, because I felt like, in a way, for me, psychoanalysis was like the higher degree that I needed. (chuckles) Not necessarily the degree, but the experience was what I thought was more significant, maybe more valuable, finally in the long run, than any kind of academic experience which I had. But it made a great deal. . . It really, this kind of investigation really led to a lot of things in my work, and I was aware of it, and I felt very fluid about that. What's very fascinating about it is Dr. Sklansky is—I wouldn't say he's a straight Freudian—but he's basically a Freudian. I think, like all intelligent psychoanalysts today, you know, there's all kinds of things which enter into that. It's not one linear process. But one of his rules—and there were very few—but one of his rules was that I didn't show him my work. I could talk about it, but I didn't show it to him. Well, that's always interested me since that time, because I think what it forced me to do was to come to terms with the content and the imagery in my work. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: You had to talk about it.

DON BAUM: . . .in a conscious way. I had to formulate what I really thought I was doing with these. . . And I think that that was very important, perhaps more important than any of the academic sort of background, at least at that particular time. It really was significant. So anyway, this kind of doll stuff has a definite relationship to that—although I can't say, you know, that I thought that I was, you

know, “This is a mommy doll, and that’s a daddy doll,” or anything like that. But it was just that I would put them into relationships. Well, you see, for instance, this piece, *The Babies of della Robbia*, which is in the Museum of Contemporary Art collection now. But that’s fairly early and it’s interestingly related to this kind of religious imagery. But it also begins to deal with some of this other information. . . Now, many of them are much more specific in terms of. . . And there’s another one I know in here [searching through book—Ed.] Well, for instance, that one: Mr. and Mrs. Ballin.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: Well, you know, that has obviously sexual connotations, and it, I think the fact that it’s a skull, you know, I mean it refers to certain passages of life and certain sorts of feelings that all human beings experience. But it’s a way, it was a way for me, in a sense, to investigate these things, and I suppose, you know, to some extent, art is for an artist. There’s always a kind of catharsis. It has a cathartic sort of meaning as well.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You work through feelings via your art.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And then I did an entire exhibition of works—actually it was a portion of a show at the Hyde Park Art Center, but I had about 25, 30 pieces in it—which were all just couples. And this was. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Dolls?

DON BAUM: Yeah, dolls. That [_____—Ed.] was in the show. And so was this one, which is in the Art Institute now [_____—Ed.].

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh.

DON BAUM: They were couples. And I remember it very well, because at the time of the. . . I’m trying to think who might have been in that show, but it seems to me Ed Flood was, and. . . I can’t recall offhand who the other artists were. But at the time of the installation, none of these things had any names. And we had this absolutely marvelous time naming them these different people. (laughter) _____ they also, it’s like Rose—well, I don’t. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you give them titles then before the show?

DON BAUM: Yeah, see, this is Clint and Clara. Yeah, they were all. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Were these real people?

DON BAUM: Well, mostly not. You know, I don’t think there were any references to any particular. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Let me ask you: Once you take the object and you’re dealing with this content, whatever it is, how much are you aware of working through formal problems as well. . .

DON BAUM: Very aware. In fact, most of my process is—on the superficial level—to be concerned with the formal problems, and to permit the intuitive and the unconscious level to operate with this. . . I mean, I feel that they work together in this way, but I don’t start out with preconceptions. And almost everything is developed in a sort of in-process way. That is, I start out with some thing, and then I add another thing, and so forth and so on. But always with this concern and interest in the formal organization of it. But not as a means to an end in any sense. I mean. . . The formal aspect of any of my things is always a result of the intuitive process.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, there has to be a certain free-flowing quality in that intuitive process, and I'm wondering if the psychoanalysis allowed you to let that process [happen].

DON BAUM: Well, I'm sure of it. See, I feel very much that way. . . . In a sense, I learned something about utilizing this vast area that all human beings have, and I'm making it function for me, through that process. I think it's absolutely directly related.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Do you use dreams at all?

DON BAUM: Not really, because dreams are really a very different manifestation, I think, of the unconscious than a free-association process. It isn't that I don't value dreams; I do very much. But they don't seem to. . . . They never particularly provide me with any imagery. But you see, I was also at this time very much interested in reading people—I mentioned earlier Djuna Barnes. And I read Joyce and Stein at this time. So I was very much interested in the writing in which this sort of stream-of-consciousness process was apparent.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. I wondered about that, if there was a connection there. . . .

DON BAUM: Yeah, um hmm. I always have felt very moved by literature, you know, I always feel like I have a kind of kinship with it. In fact, when I was at the University of Chicago, I had a minor in English. . . .

[Tape 3, side B]

DON BAUM: We were talking about literature. I think that the connection is a parallel sort of experience, that literature, writing, has for me, but it isn't a direct influence. You know, I mentioned Djuna Barnes because I felt that her imagery, in *Nightwood*, for example, is some of the most potent and evocative of visual imagery of almost any writing of that particular period. I think Stein and Joyce are both absolutely marvelous, but they don't do that. They don't produce those effects. And of course, there are. . . . I also read a lot of the French writers—French surrealist writers—and some of the poetry. And I studied French at the University of Chicago at that time, and we read quite a lot of French Symbolist poetry, and I was very taken with it. Of course, there again, it's a lot of imagery that was very suggestive. But I think I was fascinated by the mysteriousness of it, the enigmatic nature of it. . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, what it can evoke.

DON BAUM: Yeah, the evocative quality. But. . . . And occasionally I made things in relation to works and things by Djuna Barnes. There's a. . . . The Horwich's have a piece called *Nightwood*, which is direct, sort of. But mostly it's a kind of a parallel thing. And I still read a great deal. I'm very interested in. . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Does some of your imagery come from that reading, do you think? You said dreams don't provide the imagery. Or is it the objects themselves, like the dolls, sitting in front of you.

DON BAUM: The objects, the objects are the origin of the imagery, really. You see, for instance, since I've started to make these houses, I went to Haiti, and I was so excited about it, because here were all these things which I felt very involved with. All this voodoo stuff, and all of this kind of magic, and this culture which seemed like something from another period of time. Anyway, the last day that we were there. . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: And what year was this? Excuse me.

DON BAUM: It was about, oh, it must be about eight years ago, approximately. I went with a small group, and Paul Waggoner—who was at that time a dealer here in Chicago, and had a gallery that showed mostly Haitian art—he went with us. He knew people, and we went and visited some voodoo priests and all that sort of thing. Anyway, on the last day, I picked up this piece of wood on the ground that was part of the stands that they had built for the carnival. This is just a fragment. It's about this big [gesturing— Ed.]; in fact, it's in there in the house, because I've always kept it. I got home with this thing, and I felt immediately that this was like this magic. It's just a piece of painted wood about three or four inches by five inches.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And it has some kind of magic [potential].

DON BAUM: And so that's an example of the sort of germ of something. Then I made this piece which incorporated it. But that's often the way I start with things. It's very funny. Recently, a west coast art dealer has. . . [He's, She's] a collector of cups by artists. And she likes my work. In fact, she bought a piece of mine. But she's been asking me for about four years to make this piece for her. Well, so far—and it's funny, I think about it a lot—but so far, I have never found any object, any cup, or any way of making it, something, that has this particular evocative quality. So, you know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So you can't do it until this happens.

DON BAUM: I can't do it. Yeah. I've just put that aside. (chuckles) Someday.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You jumped ahead to your house images, and I think we could go over that a little bit. You had a fairly long break in doing work in the seventies, is that right?

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And then when you came back into working again, you went to the house imagery, and I'm curious to explore first of all the break, and then when you did start working again, why the house? Why the change?

DON BAUM: Well, you see. . . I'm trying to think exactly when it was, because I'm real vague about dates. My son is now thirty years old, and he was about fifteen, so it's been fifteen years, I guess, since I separated from my wife—and eventually divorced. And I had the studio, but since I departed, I had to live somewhere and I lived in hotels for a couple of, for a while, and then I moved into this building—over there, the 1700 East Fifty-Sixth Street Building—I lived there for several years, but I had a one-bedroom apartment, and I just didn't. . . Also I tried to resolve what life was all about at that time, and how I felt about it. . . Every Sunday, I saw my children—for many years. That was the arrangement that we had, you know. And then I worked. I worked at the Illinois Arts Council and I taught at Roosevelt and was involved still in the Hyde Park Art Center, so I really didn't have any time. And I didn't have any place. So I only made about two things in a period of about eight years.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You didn't work through any of the [issues] through an art _____ process.

DON BAUM: No. It was very strange, but it was really a kind of period of reassessment and coming to terms with things, that I just had to go through. I didn't even particularly miss it, at that time. I mean, I was just so busy, and I had so much on my mind, so many problems that had to be resolved, that that just had to stop at that point. And it was a physical thing as well as an emotional thing. And then I bought this apartment and moved here, and I decided that I would set up this studio.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Excuse me, had you done the dolls up until you had the [divorce].

DON BAUM: Yes, all of that preceded, yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That was pretty much clear through about '72.

DON BAUM: And you see this whole series of things which are these relationship images—these dolls, couples and so forth—that's all related to this effort to resolve some of these conflicts, feelings and so forth, that were. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: That marriage brings up?

DON BAUM: Yes, that marriage brings. And dissolution of that marriage. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Or the dissolution of it, right.

DON BAUM: And so I began to. . . The first summer, I think, after I lived here, I went north, and I started to walk regularly every day on the beach, on Lake Superior, and I started to pick up these pieces of wood, sticks and so forth. I came back and I started to make these—well, they're kind of like drawings, in a way. Well, I think when you were here before I had these three long things hanging up here, and they were made out of bones from the beach, and pieces.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right.

DON BAUM: They were strung together with hair. And then I began to make some wall things that are kind of linear constructions made out of sticks, and they're like drawings in a way. Then the next summer, I had begun to work on a piece. It was sort of a beginning of a house, but it was very small, _____ in fact. When I went north I was reading Montaillou, you know? Well, that's a book by a French historian by the name Le Roy Ladurie. Is it Lucien Le Roy Ladurie [Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie—Ed.]? I of course don't have it. I loaned it to somebody and never got it back. But his name was Ladurie, and that was his last name, and the name of the book was Montaillou. It's about a medieval village in the Pyrenees, that during the Inquisition, the village was the center of a heretical sect—kind of an Albigensian sect. And almost everyone in the village was charged with. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Being a heretic?

DON BAUM: Yes, yes. Heretical behavior. They were all tried, and many of them were killed. But the papers from this trial were sent to the Vatican, because of course it was a religious court. This Ladurie came across this material, and he wrote this. . . Well, contemporary historians are sort of divided about this, but it's a kind of psychological history thing. But he reconstructed this event and this village in this book, and it is the most, I think it's the most fascinating book. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sounds like it.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And of course at that time, a medieval village was not a place that had shops or anything.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: I mean, there were people who maybe, you know, wove cloth, or did this or did that, but it was all sort of a barter system.

SUE ANN KENDALL: The artisans _____, right.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And the whole feeling of this village and the significance of the domus, which is . . . It's a reference not only to the physical dwellings, but it's a reference to the concept of the house and how it functioned, in terms of people living there and the various kinds of family and/or friend connections and . . . Anyway, the whole thing just, I was absolutely gripped by this experience. It was like reading something that . . . I mean, the fact that it actually happened seems even now to me to be very amazing.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, does he use the term domus?

DON BAUM: Yes, he uses the term. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: As a concept of a place, then.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Yeah. And it's. . . Well, maybe this will also explain it to some extent. See, then I went north [to Upper Peninsula of Michigan—DB], and I used to go to this small town called Au Train, which is on Lake Superior. It's between Munising and Marquette on Lake Superior on the Upper Peninsula. It was a thriving village, which was the center of a lumbering business, of fishing, and it was settled primarily by French Canadians. The village is still there, and many of the houses that were the original houses are there, these log cabins. And it's a very, you know, it's a completely deprived, forgotten place—now surrounded by summer cottages and so forth. But it was something that I had known all my life, practically. As a young person, I remember going there and seeing it. But I went back there this summer I was reading this book, and I started looking around and suddenly I realized that in a strange way that these dwellings had a sort of direct connection with this other sort of information that I was getting from this book. (chuckles)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh.

DON BAUM: And that probably, in its original state, the village had not been so unlike a kind of typical village in France and possibly, you know. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: You mean, the way people come together to make a community _____ and so on _____.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Right, right. Anyway, I came back and I immediately finished this piece that I was working on, and then I just started to make these buildings. . . And I've made almost nothing else since that time.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And the fact that you cover them with painting. . . The surface is quite flat.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Well, that's the most recent development. I haven't shown any of that work yet. And I don't quite know what that means, but I. . . Well, I do know one thing about it is that, along the way, I felt always interested in the sort of art by the nonartist. That's a recurring theme in Chicago, anyway; that's something which comes through.

SUE ANN KENDALL: The outsider artist.

DON BAUM: The outsider artist, and also the kind of material and so forth that you might come across in media, where. . . Not like New York Pop, but the sort of drawings that you find on the back of TV Guide or inside matchbook covers, that sort of thing—although those images are probably more important for a lot of other artists in Chicago than they were for me. But I began to be

interested in these things that people made, you know, the cottage industry sort of thing, all these frames that I have, made out of cigarette packages?

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: You know, well, they were all made in this prison up near Marquette, Michigan, up near this area.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh!

DON BAUM: I used to go there in the summer, and I'd buy these frames. So this interest in this non-art is something which I feel is omnipresent in my work, but I think it's especially characteristic in these recent things, because it's. . . The feelings that I have about it is that I'm taking something which somebody thought about as being a kind of art, and which anybody in the so-called sophisticated art world would never have—they're not going to have any paint-by-number paintings up on the walls.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. (chuckles)

DON BAUM: But I began to really appreciate something about them; I didn't quite know what it was. I think a part of it was the fact that, you know, somebody spent a great deal of time, and made this thing, which to them had this—well, it was art. And so, by taking these paintings and fragmenting them, they begin to have another kind of life. It all sort of fits in; it's like. . . You see, I think my work is really involved to a very large extent with ideas about transformation. You take something out of its original context and it becomes transformed. Well, it's the surrealist doctrine, really.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, um hmm.

DON BAUM: My most recent involvement in this is really kind of funny because I thought about it. I made this piece about four or five years ago, out of Lincoln Logs and various other materials, and. . . It's one of the few pieces that I've made over the years that has any kind of sense of the interior, because most of my [works—Ed.], they're either closed or just empty.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, right.

DON BAUM: Because I'm not interested somehow in what goes on in those at this point. I mean, that's. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: No, the interest is in the surface, the outside, and in its overall shape.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right. And I'm interested in the idea of the house as something which has multiple meanings; you know, I feel like there's probably no other image that is as fertile, as rich, as evocative, as the house, because, after all, what do kids make when they're. . . You know, they draw mama and papa, and then they draw a house.

SUE ANN KENDALL: A house, yeah. Where one lives, where one is centered.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right. And, you know, it obviously has very intense sorts of meanings—to everyone—at all times. Shelter is a basic concern. Anyway, this piece [_____—Ed.] has a very large bone in it that. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: In the interior?

DON BAUM: Yes, occupies this. Well, about a year and a half ago, I went to the gallery. The piece was there—been for a long time—and I thought about it, and I went and I got it. I wanted it again. I brought it home and I kept looking at it, and then I thought, “Well, I know what I want to do with this. I want to have it cast in bronze.” (chuckles) So I started questioning people. I know very little about these kinds of processes, and Vaughn Kurtz, who [was, is] a neighbor here and a friend of mine, knew about this foundry. He happened to be going near there, and he found out some things about it for me. It got me started. Well, then I found out that there’s a foundry in Southern Illinois University, and so I got in touch with Tom Walsh, who was the head of that program. We talked about it, and then he came to see me one day, and I showed him the piece and asked him if it could be cast, and he said, “Oh, yes. It’d be no problem.” And I said, “Well, does it mean that the original piece is going to be destroyed in this?” And he said, “No, we can do it with a mold and the piece would be intact when we’re through.” So anyway, this went on it seemed—well, it was a year and a half—and I just got it. In fact, it’s right there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh.

DON BAUM: And there are three casts of it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That’s real. . . You got into bona fide sculpture. (laughs)

DON BAUM: Right. Bona fide sculpture. But you see, what interests me about it is that, again, the material has gone through this process of having been, you know, natural material. . . Now it’s altered; it’s bronze again. . . But anyway, it’s about this transformation and stuff. And it was very funny, because when I was in Paris just recently, I went to the Picasso Museum and I saw—well, it’s so incredible—but one of the things which I saw, and which I always loved so, is this bull’s head that he did from the bicycle seat and handlebars?

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, the bicycle, um hmm.

DON BAUM: And he made this comment, you know, that sometime that’ll be thrown on the junk heap, the sculpture, and someone’ll come along and say “Just what I need for my bicycle.” Well, see, that’s the sort of an attitude which I feel very akin to, you know, this sort of reuse of materials, the eternal nature of how things are sifted and come back to the surface.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Only this is by the change—either by juxtaposition or by transformation of materials, or whatever—that those possibilities come to light.

DON BAUM: Yeah, yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I was thinking of Duchamp when you were talking, about his taking an object, sticking it in a gallery. But his is a little different, because he tended to take the object just as it is.

DON BAUM: Yeah. But he’s terribly important and was very important to me.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Okay, I was going to ask you that, because we didn’t talk about it last time, and I wondered about the influence.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Well, because there’s nobody, probably, in the history of twentieth-century art who took things out of context and created such an incredible, brilliant sort of evocation without it actually being explicit. I mean, things like that urinal and that bottle rack, I mean, those are ready-mades, but they became, they become something else by the mere fact that he of course picked them out of the context of contemporary existence. No, I feel philosophically much more related to

Duchamp than I do in a physical sense, whereas some other. . . You see, somebody like Ernst was especially important to me because of the constant experimentation with techniques.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, which Duchamp rejected.

DON BAUM: Yeah, he didn't do that. And that whole. . . I mean, I feel certainly most akin to Dada and Surrealism, as far as a movement of art that has been important to me. I think it's fairly apparent from what I've been saying today and _____ other things, you know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right. So you're still exploring the house imagery. You're pretty much staying with the basic house shape.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and I really investigated that, in terms of thinking about it. I finally ended up deciding that there isn't really any necessity for me to change what I'm doing unless it's a natural thing. You know, at some point or another I will probably no longer make houses, but until I feel that way, I'm going to continue doing it. And, you know, if there are too many, that's not my problem. (laughs) All I do is. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, the same with the dolls. They took their natural course and this will too.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But it's interesting to me to find out where the original source for the house imagery was.

DON BAUM: Well, that was a very curious combination of circumstances. And then when I was in Paris last year, I met this old man named Olivier Marc, who wrote a book called *The Psychology of the House*, and he gave me a copy of it. I saw him, as a matter of fact, when I was there again. He's a psychoanalyst, and his wife is also, I guess, an analyst. And I just think the book is absolutely fascinating because it corroborates all sorts of ideas which I felt sort of intuitively but never really verbalized—I don't write, don't think, don't theorize in any way, but here is this book, "Now, wait a minute! Let's see how someone. . . Thank you! Thank you!" (laughter)

SUE ANN KENDALL: It's like, "Here is the book which _____ from _____ to your houses." [both speaking at once—Ed.]

DON BAUM: Right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's wonderful. Well, there it is all codified and put down.

DON BAUM: Um hmm.
[Interruption in taping]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Is there anything else you want to talk about in regard to your own work, where the source materials come from, or the imagery comes from? Do you have a favorite artist yourself that you. . .

DON BAUM: Oh, yeah. I have several. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Okay, let's hear the list.

DON BAUM: I think that some of my. . . Well, here's another point about that. Certain relationships

which were important to me with other artists were, I think, important for my work. For example, June Leaf, who I met, well, it must have been in the, maybe the fifties. She, you know, lived in Chicago, but she finally at some point traveled around a good deal and was married, was here and there, but she came back here, lived here, and I saw a good deal of her. She's an artist who has. . . We have always had a sort of a kinship, partly because of our methods, and our concerns, and the sort of dependence on intuition, and so on. Our work is totally different—although her early work and my early collages are directly related. We had a show together at the Kalamazoo Art Institute many years ago. It's in this catalogue. I've forgotten what the date of it is. But she was very important to me. And we happened to be together the first time that we ever saw Joseph Cornell. At that time, Alan Frumkin was introducing Cornell and other, I think, really important artists in Chicago. We happened to be in the gallery one time and saw this piece that is not only in the Bergman collection—I don't know whether it's in the Art Institute or whether they still have it in their private collection. . . But it was, it's a round cheese box and it's lined with mirrors, and there's many, many needles sticking up with a thimble on each one. You look through a little hole, and it's like this world, you know, it's this fabulous world.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: So Cornell, I think was very important to me. I don't feel that my work in any way really has much relation to the feeling of Joseph Cornell's work. I'm not really very directly interested in nostalgia. I mean, if it happens, it happens. But it's not a significant thing for me, whereas I feel that's very important in Cornell. But, you know, that's an artist who I at one time admired a great deal and still do, but, you know. . . I went to Art Expo yesterday and I just thought, "Why am I here?" You know, seeing twenty Leger drawings is exciting, but. . . I mean, I have such a formed opinion and a great deal of respect and love for Leger as an artist, that seeing these things just doesn't interest me anymore. I think that's partly because I've seen an awful lot of stuff. But there are, you know, people who have meant a lot to me, and I think Picasso certainly is an artist that I've been very responsive to. It's curious that you ask me this question and yesterday the things which really interested me at the Art Expo are completely unlike what's going on in contemporary art. But there were two or three—I think there were three small drawings by [Fernand—Ed.] Khnopff, the Belgian Symbolist artist. And I saw a number of those things in Europe and I'm always sort of looking for them. But I think they're absolutely great. (laughs) And so, you know, that's an example of someone that at this point in my life. . . Now that's of course a relatively recent discovery.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: You know, I didn't become aware of Khnopff till about four years ago, so there's a kind of a freshness. And I think that artists—you know, you go through certain kinds of cycles about who you want to look at, and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Want to observe _____ and think about and _____ too.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right. And there's always artists in your background that you admire. But they just don't mean the same thing at all times.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: And of course I still, you know, it's interesting, but I still feel—when I look at say a Karl Wirsum or a Jim Nutt or any of those artists that were associated—I still feel that that work is absolutely great work. And it's interesting, because I've known them so much of my life, and have seen so much of the work, but I don't feel like it loses its impact. It still has this kind of impact for me.

So there are some. . . _____ that there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, that leads us into your relationship to artists here in Chicago, which I want to get into anyway—and go back into your curating and so on—and that was one question I wanted to ask anyway, was how you felt about their work in retrospect. You've answered that question a bit now, but let's go back to—what was it?—early sixties.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: 1962, or about then. And the whole group of people that formed the Hairy Who.

DON BAUM: Um hmm.

SUE ANN KENDALL: How did you. . . Whom did you meet first? And how did you meet them?

DON BAUM: Well, you see, I had been doing shows at the Hyde Park Art Center, I think, before that. I think I started to teach at the art center in about 1950.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Okay, just a second here.

[Tape 4, side A; also marked Tape 2, side A]

DON BAUM: Well, anyway, I started working as a teacher there, and because of the redevelopment in Hyde Park. . . When I first taught there, we were in a storefront on 57th Street, and there were little exhibitions, but. . . The students were primarily women from the neighborhood who came in, maybe once or twice a week, for drawing or painting classes, and there was probably some other kind of classes as well. But it wasn't an exhibiting organization, except occasionally they'd put their pictures up and they'd have a tea on Sunday or something. But at a certain point, we moved out of that space over to 55th Street in what had been an apartment store. And it had a, it was a marvelous space, and we knew that it was only temporary, but we moved there, and there was a big gallery. So I thought, "Well, this is a chance to really do something with exhibitions. My theme from the very beginning was that it was important to show Chicago artists. Because here were all these artists in Chicago and none of them had. . . I mean, there were two or three people that had galleries. But nobody else did. And there were almost no opportunités. You see, this directly relates also to the fact that Momentum—you know, Exhibition Momentum—emerges, that Participating Artists of Chicago—or PAC—emerges. But Momentum is really quite early. But you see that's one show a year—or every two years.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: And then the Art Institute show. I exhibited in the Chicago and Vicinity Show from, I think my first painting I ever had was in the forties, in the late forties. But that was once a year.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: There just wasn't anything happening. And the commercial dealers, of which there were very few. . . [Alan—Ed.] Frumkin was here. He had eventually showed Cosmo [Campoli—DB] and June Leaf, and a few. But there just weren't any. So my idea about the art center was that it would be a place where artists who have had no previous exhibiting experience could show. I began to put on these shows, and some of them were group—they were almost all group shows. They were either of artists that I suggested and put together—like I remember there was a show of

Roland Ginzler and Ellen Lanyon and Richard Hunt and Miyoko Ito, I think that was a group of four artists. Then I began to do shows that were organized around a theme. What I also did is. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Now this is still fifties, you're talking about?

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, I'm looking at this [book or resume?— Ed.] . . . It was probably early, late fifties and early sixties.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Late fifties and early sixties, um hmm.

DON BAUM: And then I also did a show there—it was the Hyde Park Centennial—so we decided to do this show, and that was very exciting for me because Hyde Park had been an artists' community at one time, and a lot of really important people had lived here. So I really got into it, and I spent a lot of time at the Art Institute and at the Historical Society, and I dug all kinds of things up. It was from the nineties and up to the present—well, at that time, late fifties or early sixties. I did things like that. I also did. . . Well, the theme shows were probably the most important; for instance, just looking down here at this booklet [_____—Ed.], I did a series of three exhibitions which were called “Animal,” “Vegetable,” and “Mineral.” And there were maybe thirty to forty artists invited to participate in this. The general idea was that they would make things that would be specifically related to the theme. They didn't always do it, and sometimes it was just part of the theme, you know, in some way or another.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, yeah.

DON BAUM: But there were just great numbers of artists included in these shows. And they were very popular because the art center right at that point became a kind of meeting place, where other artists would come. And of course if you have thirty artists in a show, you have thirty people coming to an opening, and their friends and their mothers and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: So then people around the community began to come to the exhibitions. And all of a sudden there was this kind of atmosphere about the art center, which was very alive, where people wanted to come and they wanted to be in the shows. And the shows were fascinating because they were so varied. Not everything was great or even good—in fact, some of it was probably pretty terrible. But nonetheless, those same artists sometimes were in three or four or five shows during a year, and they'd have maybe one thing, but they were beginning to get some exposure. Then I began to do shows in which there'd be four to six to eight artists, you know, just to showcase people.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You were really picking the people yourself, is that right?

DON BAUM: Yes. I had, really, completely free reign to do whatever. . . Nobody had ever done it. There wasn't anything that had happened before.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So you could curate how you wanted to.

DON BAUM: Exactly. We didn't have any money, but at that time it didn't cost very much money. And we didn't sell anything for a long time. Then of course eventually we did sell a lot of things from the gallery, and we had enough money to do things a little bit more elaborately. But we'd have, we had posters, and they became quite famous, the art center posters. Usually one of the artists would design them, or sometimes they'd be an exquisite corpse or something like that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: And then I met. . . Well, I showed both Karl Wirsum and Ed Paschke. . . They must have been in group shows. I recently was reading in the catalogue of Karl's show, which is just currently on in New York at Phyllis Kind's, and in it there's a reference to the first things which I ever saw of his, and which I showed at the art center—and they were small oil paintings with collage areas. And the collage areas were like skin, maybe like skin ailments, or an anatomical kind of material. But they were integrated, and they were, I thought, absolutely fascinating things. Ed Paschke's early paintings were landscapes, I think. But anyway, I began to show their work.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You met them because they came to the center?

DON BAUM: Well, I met them. . . See, I can't even remember now when I met, how I met artists, but probably mostly because they came to the art center. But I used to go and look at artists' work—all the time. I mean, there was hardly a week that I didn't go and see three or four different _____. I got to know people.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So you'd travel to where their studios were and go see their work.

DON BAUM: Yeah, I just got to know artists. And then, you know, the fact that the art center was a kind of a flourishing, exciting place. Artists came there. They'd come to openings, and I met them, and I'd look at their work.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, it seems to me that it's you that made it into that kind of a place.

DON BAUM: Well, it just happened to be, you know, a situation where I had free. . . I didn't even think about it, you know. It's exciting, it was a lot of work, but the people chipped in.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You were having fun.

DON BAUM: They got into it and they came. . . Usually the artists either did or assisted in the installation, but sometimes I did it myself. Alice worked with me a great deal during those earlier years. There were always people around who were interested in getting into it. So it was. . . There was a feeling, you know, a kind of a communal feeling about it, which was really wonderful. The openings were like great parties, you know. Everybody had a great time.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, I read about them. (chuckles)

DON BAUM: Yeah. Anyway, so I was. . . I met then Jim Nutt, Gladys Nilsson [Jim Nutt's wife—Ed.], and Suellen Rocca, and James Falconer, and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Art Green?

DON BAUM: Art Green, right. That's the six. And they were interested. . . I dealt primarily with Gladys and Jim, as I remember, but I don't recall as much talking with the others. But I met them and they were interested in showing at the art center. I saw their work—they were all MFA candidates. I think I may have seen the work they did in their final year. And I was very excited about it. They wanted to have a show, and I said that I thought that there was one other person that they should look at, at least—and I didn't care if they did or didn't, but I thought they responded—and that was Karl.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm!

DON BAUM: So they got hold of Karl and saw and met him, and it immediately jelled. I mean, his whole point of view was, you know, so related to what. . . They had never known each other, but they got _____ each other.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Interesting, uh huh.

DON BAUM: So then they came. . . We had a number of meetings at the art center, and they came up with this name, the Hairy Who.

SUE ANN KENDALL: How did they come up with the name?

DON BAUM: Well, you know, also, this period in the sixties is the period of the beginning of rock, and there's a kind of a language about, you know, popular language that's around at this time. And of course all of these people are very much interested in language and very much interested in this kind of satirical and ironic language. There were a number of suggestions, which were about. . . The idea of naming the show, or naming the group, was something which they were quite intent on. And at that. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Wanted to name the show, or was it to actually become a group?

DON BAUM: Well, I think it was. . . In a sense they were already a group, because of the way they were behaving, and the way they were working together.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh, _____.

DON BAUM: That, in a sense, that sort of group mass already existed. I think the idea of it was to identify themselves as a group. I don't think that any of them really had any idea. . . In fact, Christina [Ramberg—Ed.] said something about that last night, that at the time that they first started to exhibit they didn't really have any idea about what it meant to have shows, or be in a gallery, or anything like that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Much less be a group.

DON BAUM: Chicago artists just didn't do that, you know. I mean, there wasn't. . . I mean, there were artists organizations, but they were not at all like this kind of point of view. The name the Hairy Who was devised as a direct reference to Harry Bouras, who is an art historian. He taught in Chicago, and he has this radio—I guess he still does have this radio program.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: He occupied this rather curious position at that time. He was very much admired and possibly still is by many people; I don't know. I never see Harry. And I knew quite well—he was a friend of Jack Harris's, and I went to his house a couple of times, and we were friends. But to this group, Harry was a kind of, well, a slightly amusing figure, in a way.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did they know him, or did they just know his _____?

DON BAUM: Yeah, they knew. . . They probably knew him, but not very well. But they knew about these radio programs.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, they knew the show.

DON BAUM: There's a kind of a . . . Well, I don't know whether it is or not, but I was going to say there's a kind of a pretentiousness about the way he delivers the information.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh.

DON BAUM: He had become a kind of personality because of this radio show, because there wasn't anything at all like that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: There wasn't anything else. Yeah.

DON BAUM: The fact that he talked about art all the time, you know, on a weekly basis, was pretty far out. But they responded to this on a sort of a humorous, ironic, and satirical level.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I had no idea that's where the name came from.

DON BAUM: Yeah. So anyway, it refers specifically to Harry and. . . But of course, hair, as a symbolic material, is something which was very important in their work, too. I mean, especially, I think often of Karl's work, you know; *Mane and Hairdress* is the name of one of his paintings. It's all about this hair. And there were numerous things in his work. I think it's, it was kind of fascinating in the same way, although perhaps not as specifically present, in the work of the others. But you see it has a kind of. . . It has a lot of different meanings. The idea of thinking of hair in a kind of an abstract way has slightly, I wouldn't say nasty, but possibly naughty connotations.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, um hmm.

DON BAUM: You know, because it not only refers to the hair on your head, but it refers to your pubic hair and the hair under your armpits—body hair, is what it was.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sure, body hair, yeah.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And so in a certain way this name has a kind of a reference to that slightly not nice meaning.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, there are overtones there.

DON BAUM: Right, right. So, you know, the name of it, I just thought it was very funny, and I liked it a lot. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you encourage them to find a name for the show?

DON BAUM: Oh, yes. I was very interested in the idea that they would select a name for themselves and they would be. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: But you weren't involved in the process.

DON BAUM: Well, I remember talking to them about the various possibilities, but the ultimate decision to call it that was their decision.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You remember some of the other possibilities?

DON BAUM: Oh, I wish I could because they were so funny.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I'll bet! I'll bet they had a wonderful time picking a name.

DON BAUM: I mean, they were just wonderful. Well, I don't know whether Karl. . . Karl Wirsum has a very good memory. He, and probably Jim too, but at some point or another, they should definitely talk about those early times, because I think. . . See, I was so involved in all kinds of physical problems at the art center all the time that I would be aware of that at the beginning, but then I wouldn't know. . . And they became very close—very quickly. They produced, you know, these comic books.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yes. And did they do that themselves, or were you also involved?

DON BAUM: No. They came up with the idea, and we figured out how it was going to be paid for, and of course it wasn't very expensive and so forth. But you see, they had this. . . Everything was just right, at the right time, in the right place, in some way, you know. Here was the freedom to do what they wanted to do. There was a little bit of money. And it was a period in which this kind of flamboyance was right on the nose.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Yeah. And of course, you see, one of the things which congealed, in a sense, this group—was the fact that they not only liked the same things. They liked naive art, primitive art, found objects, you know, all of this kind of material—which is the peripheral material of Surrealism to a large extent. And also, they had a common disdain for the same kinds of things, for example, for the New York school, Abstract Expressionism. They also had a common disdain for things like high Renaissance painting, you know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: And it's absolutely fascinating to me, to this day those people—the Chicago artists at that group. . . Now Christine or Phil or Ray, one of the others, talked about Siennese painting again last night. You know, it's just an ongoing thing; it never seems to stop.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You don't have that same kind of disdain, but you maybe appreciated where they were coming from. How did you relate to all that?

DON BAUM: Well, I'm different in that way. I understand that. And I guess partly because of my first experiences in going to Europe and my feeling about the content of Western art, the religious content, I'm very much more drawn to the more primitive areas. Like I like Romanesque sculpture, whereas I don't especially like high Gothic sculpture.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Gothic, right.

DON BAUM: And I like northern, early Italian painting, the primitives, and I don't like Titian and Tintoretto and so forth. On the other hand, because I've also been a teacher, I do not feel that as a teacher that I had any role to play making a point about that. It isn't that important to me. I think there's, you know, the potentiality of producing works of art is so vast and so infinite in terms of the character that. . . I mean, I don't know what they would have thought about someone like Mondrian, but I'm sure that some of those kinds of artists would have been of no interest to them at all, whereas they were very interesting to me, because I sort of responded to the kind of impulse that produced them. And I did like the products. I felt the same way about Abstract Expressionism. I just don't have those feelings. To me what is art is so vast, it doesn't mean that you're going to go for certain kinds of things on a level of enthusiasm, but nonetheless they do exist and they're very capable and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: And they're valid.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and they're valid, yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But did you. . . You must have allowed them to be, to have their disdain, or to have their feelings.

DON BAUM: Oh, yes, absolutely. I mean, that's theirs. It's not mine. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right. But they must have felt that you were accepting in that way; in terms of whatever they wanted to be, they were allowed to be somehow.

DON BAUM: Yes. I never made any point about. . . You see, you know, there's this legendary, and I think fallacious idea, that there's some kind of division between two kinds of art that's produced in Chicago: abstract art versus imagist art. Well, that's, as far as I'm concerned, a complete misconception. There were always artists working in Chicago who worked in this kind of formal way, and I always showed their work at the Hyde Park Art Center. Then of course there were always those sort of people, like Miyoko Ito, who sort of hovered in between a formal point of view and the rich symbolism and the imagery of the Chicago imagists. But I never. . . I mean, there were always things in these shows. I mean, I could go through this list and say well, you know, here is so and so and so and so, you know, that were artists. I feel very strongly about that still. I just don't conceive of art as being something which has. . . You know, that one kind is better necessarily than another. It satisfies different things and different people in different ways at different times.

SUE ANN KENDALL: At different times, right. (laughter) Well said; I think you covered all the bases there.

DON BAUM: Right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Do you think there was always special kinship with you because of the kind of work that you do, perhaps?

DON BAUM: I think there was some. Yes, I think that was important. But I think it was also just a kind of an attitude that I had at the time. And, you see, I mean, the art center had a very nice gallery at the time that—we were over on Blackstone—and we had nice space. They wanted to really. . . First of all they wanted to exhibit some of their objects. And Karl [Wirsum—Ed.], in particular still does have—his house is just a collection of the most incredible stuff. There were a number of cases, showcases, that were just filled with their collection.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Of things, not art objects.

DON BAUM: Of things, not art objects.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Just _____ I mean not many. . .

DON BAUM: All kinds of strange and curious things.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That was included in the show.

DON BAUM: That was in the show. Then they covered the walls of the panels with flowered linoleum.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, I read that.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and then. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, that was their idea? Or yours?

DON BAUM: That was their idea. See, that's a part, again, of the point of view which they have—which I would say most of them have now quite gotten over—but, you know, of a kind of objection to what they felt was a sterile concept of the white gallery, you know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: Like that's. . . In other words, I think that has to do with a kind of a peculiar thing that has to do with them trying to make the spectator look at the work in almost the most difficult circumstances.

SUE ANN KENDALL: (chuckles)

DON BAUM: Like you put a painting on a flowered linoleum wall, and you've created a kind of a dialogue between that work and the spectator.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, definitely.

DON BAUM: A very potent sort of thing. And then, you see, Jim Falconer, he exhibited—I don't know whether it was in the first or the second—but in one of the shows where they did use this flowered linoleum—so it must have been the first one—he showed a series of silkscreen prints that are really directly related to some sort of Field Museum things, although they don't look like anything specifically, but they're directly related to ethnological kind of material. They're on, they're framed with flowered linoleum mats and have brilliantly painted frames in addition to that, wooden frames. So, you know, these juxtapositions were really fascinating. Now they also—of course they didn't have any money. They wore clothing which was primarily thrift shop clothing, and it was often very fascinating and unusual and very, you know, no effort to deal with the mode in any sense.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: And Karl still, you know, either makes his clothes or they come from—I mean, to this very day—they come from thrift shops. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's wonderful. You mentioned the Field Museum. What put them on to that?

DON BAUM: Well, the Field Museum, I think, perhaps more so than the collection at the Art Institute is important to the Chicago imagist group, because. . . Well, first of all, Kathleen Blackshear, who I mentioned earlier, was cognizant of the connections that the surrealists felt about primitive art. And she was herself very, very much influenced in her work by primitive art. And in her classes that was one of the things which you did is you went to the Field Museum and you made drawings. Then, when she left the school and Whitney Halstead took over, he was even more involved in it, because he was, you know, he was writing a book on African art when he died. I mean, he was deeply involved, and he had begun to collect it. Then a lot of these artists have primitive things that they have collected.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So you think it was influenced by those two people?

DON BAUM: Those two people primarily, yeah. But you see, here is this absolutely, incredibly rich source of visual information that most artists had not really used. You know, it just wasn't usual at all.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Even for the Art Institute, for your visual stimulation _____.

DON BAUM: Right. . . And of course they have these now, you know, Jim has fabulous primitive things. As they've become more successful, _____ they've acquired things.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What about outsider artists? Because of course they were interested in that, as you've already mentioned. Where did they come across that—on their own or were they discovering it through the Art Institute?

DON BAUM: Everybody around at that time that came across anything sort of told other people. There was a cleaner, for instance, on North Park Street—he was an Armenian, I think—and he had decorated the entire interior of this cleaning establishment and painted everything in it—the floors, the walls, the counters, some of the equipment. You know, these like discoveries.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: And there were at that time many more of this sort of thing. But then later, when Jim and Gladys went to California, they found people there. They're always looking.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So it's around.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It's the predisposition to find them.

DON BAUM: And then of course they discovered Joseph Yoakum.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: Well, I can't tell you who was the first person, whether it was Whitney maybe, but one of the group. And Whitney was a practicing artist as well as an art historian, and he was also very much influenced and fascinated by found objects and by primitive art. His work has very definite connections with it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: But I don't remember now. Again, that's something which probably one of those people knows or remembers, but I don't remember. But I remember how they used to go out there and they'd buy six or seven of these things, you know; they were like two dollars and something. And now of course they're very valuable.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's right.

DON BAUM: And so I don't know, Ray has like 45 and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, probably sitting on a gold mine now, right.

DON BAUM: Yeah. (laughter)

SUE ANN KENDALL: What about Ray's role with these people? Ray Yoshida.

DON BAUM: Well, Ray was in the army, and. . . Well, we moved into our house in Kenwood, I think, in the middle fifties, and while we lived there—I think we lived there several years. See that's funny in terms of time, because Ray must have gone to school. . . He did go to school somewhere else. Did his undergraduate work, I think somewhere else, and came to the Art Institute and was in graduate school at the same time as Alice. But then he went away; he was out of Chicago for a while. So he was gone. And then he came back as a teacher at the school. It was at that point that he became very much involved with these artists. He [had known—Ed.] them, but that was the beginning of his importance in that role. [clarification: He had known them previously, but when he came back to Chicago became involved—Ed.]. Then his work changed radically at that time. He made very major, I think, advances in his own work. And, you know, since then, because he's had an administrative position at the school for a long time, he's been very important there. And I would say that the attitudes which are stressed by these people are, to some extent, directly related to all of these things that I've been saying—and Ray is important in that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's what I'm wondering. How much was this group of people formed by the Art Institute influence?

DON BAUM: I would say that, at the beginning, there was probably very little influence, because the main painting teacher at the School of the Art Institute when they were in school was Paul Wieghart, and Wieghart came out of the French tradition. Do you mind if I take this telephone call?

SUE ANN KENDALL: No.

DON BAUM: I placed some calls this morning, and _____.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sure.

[Tape 4, side B]

DON BAUM: Is it okay? [the tape recorder—Ed.]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah.

DON BAUM: Well, you know, that doesn't mean that there weren't other teachers there besides Wieghart. Wieghart was a very imposing figure and a very, very wonderful painter, I thought. I loved his work. But it was out of a Matisse kind of tradition, and very subtle. Imagery was very secondary; they were very abstracted images. And then there were several other teachers there, such as Boris Anisfeldt, and, oh, there were a number of Europeans who came out of the European expressionist tradition. Now someone like Seymour, for instance—Rosofsky—he really fit into that. And then there were others that did, but I would say that the important factors in the school that probably helped produce this particular kind of art and to create, in a sense, these artists was really this involvement with the Field Museum, Blackshear, Halstead, and the sort of Dada-Surrealist traditions. But they were gotten at more independently, away from the actual setting of the school itself.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Were you in any way a father figure to these people?

DON BAUM: Oh boy, what an interesting question. [pauses] I suppose that in a certain sense that's true, that I functioned in a certain way with them. I'm just enough older than they are. And I had been around a good deal more. You know, in terms of the art center and various other things, I

probably did have this. . . Well, I think it's true, because I know that at the point at which they began to be successful, and began to really enter the commercial gallery world, some of the experiences which they had were troublesome for them, and they came back to me and said, "Look, here's what some of. . ."

SUE ANN KENDALL: Here's what's going on.

DON BAUM: "Here's what's going on. What do you think?" And so. . . I probably functioned as a kind of a father figure to them in the sense that they'd started at the art center, and they had. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, they trusted you there.

DON BAUM: Yeah, they trusted me.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And then they went on into the big, wide, nasty world. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah, yeah. And of course, you know, what's so funny about that is many years have passed and now these people occupy administrative positions at the School of the Art Institute.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: You know, they've gone all the way around from, in a sense. . . You see, none of them got fellowships, for example, because their work was so complete. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Early on, yeah. [On the original draft transcript, SAK asked DB for clarification here; he apparently did not see the note—Ed.]

DON BAUM: Yeah, they sort of entered the big art world, and I don't know that the attitudes necessarily are so different, but their attitudes had become the attitude, you know. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. Now they're mainstreamed a little bit in that sense.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, they were considered a group, or, you know, we still think of them somehow conceptually as a group. Did they do things together as a group, or did they simply show together? Why were they a group?

DON BAUM: Well, they were, first of all, close friends.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Personally? So it's a personal friendship.

DON BAUM: Personally close friends, and that I would say to some extent still exists. They saw each other, and got together and looked at each other's work. And of course they worked on these comic strips and posters together, so there was always a very congenial sort of personal relationship. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: So it's both personal and professional, really, because they also talked about their art with each other.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did they go to movies together?

DON BAUM: Oh, yes.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What kind of movies did they go to?

DON BAUM: Well, I think that all of them, to some extent, in the earlier years were film buffs, you know. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: The foreign films or popular?

DON BAUM: I would think about everything. See, I don't know how much. . . But, you know, there was a lot of interest in film at that time. It was sort of the beginning of the. . . You know, I was thinking about that recently because the Hyde Park Art Center had a film program and a film series, and Genet just died, you know, recently.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, right.

DON BAUM: And I think it was in the early sixties we showed the Genet film, the *Le Chant d'Amour*, which is this incredible film. Nobody even knows it anymore, I think. But at that time it was a very daring thing to do. And we showed all the [Stan—DB] Brakhage things. I was involved, and I went. There were others who were involved in that particular program. I think that was important. . . But you see, then also another thing that happened was that many of these people were picked up by Phyllis Kind. And so. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: That was later though, wasn't it?

DON BAUM: Yeah. But you see, then they were all in the same gallery, and so there was a kind of a continuity about their lives.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. Parallel.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What kinds of things did they read? Did they read [William—Ed.] Burroughs?

DON BAUM: No, I don't think so. I have. I don't think they did. In fact, I don't have any recollection particularly of them being very much involved in contemporary literature or anything like that. Nor were they particularly involved in rock in the early years. Karl, especially, you know, has had from the very earliest, a very strong interest in Chicago blues. And he knew Howling Wolf and the other rather famous Chicago blues singers. But I don't think. . . Somehow or other I just don't think that music of that sort—popular music or whatever you want to call it—was very important—nor was writing.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. There's somewhat of an image of their being anti-intellectual.

DON BAUM: I think there is a certain. . . I think that's less the case at this point, because after all people change and mature and so forth. But I think at that time, yes. You see, it's an anti-establishment point of view, which includes. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Which was early sixties.

DON BAUM: . . .this kind of anti-intellectual thing. And to some extent apolitical.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Even in the sixties?

DON BAUM: Yes. I mean, I would say that in Chicago in general _____ . . . Now there were some people who were not like that. I mean, Ellen [Lanyon—DB], Roland [Ginzel—DB], and Richard [Hunt—DB]. But they're very different kinds of artists that really come from a whole different thing. I mean, there might have been a satirical or ironic reaction to things that would appear in the work, but I would say that it wasn't an important aspect of their philosophy or their totality.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What about their knowledge of art history and, specifically, Pop Art?

DON BAUM: They were not at all interested in New York Pop. I mean, that was somewhat on the same level as Abstract Expressionism. You see, I think the New York art market and the New York scene was never particularly attractive to these artists.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Was it a reaction against the scene, or was it really the art that just didn't interest them?

DON BAUM: I think it was both things. You see—as came up last night in this funny panel discussion—I don't think that these artists really thought about the fact that they could really make a living as artists. I don't think that was something which was foremost at all. I think it might have been a kind of unconscious desire, but it was more like, "Well, if I could sell a painting." It wasn't, you know, "I can make it." And, you know, since that time, there are lots of artists who start out their careers, you know, they finish the first two years of the School of the Art Institute and are looking for a gallery. But that's all changed; that's all quite new. That's a different point of view. Well, there was no history for it. There were art fairs. And I don't know, I don't recall, but some of them—Karl may have, I don't remember—may have participated in art fairs. But, first of all, their work was so unsalable. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah. Did people like Katharine Kuh have any influence at all over the sixties generation? _____ .

DON BAUM: No, because Katharine Kuh. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: She was gone.

DON BAUM: She was gone from here. I'll tell you who was important—as far as somebody coming from the outside—was Walter Hopps. He came to Chicago. . . He was considered for the position of director of the Contemporary Museum, and he came here to be interviewed, and he came to see me that night. In fact, it was like eleven-thirty and he stayed until about three-thirty in the morning. He had been through this interview which he did not enjoy. But that's another story. Anyway, there happened to be a Hairy Who show at the art center, and I took him over there. (We'd sort of been in touch; he'd been here maybe once before.) Anyway, he was very excited about it, and as a result of that visit he put on this Hairy Who show at the Dupont Center Gallery in D.C.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, uh huh.

DON BAUM: Which of course was received like a lead balloon because, I mean, in the middle of the color field world?

SUE ANN KENDALL: (laughs) Here was this stuff.

DON BAUM: Right. With a lot of painted walls, the linoleum and all that stuff, as well. It was very funny.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But he did it.

DON BAUM: Yeah, and he always kept in touch. Then he was the person who really was responsible for the fact that I did that show for the Sao Paolo Biennale, the American entry.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh really?

DON BAUM: Which was called “Made in Chicago.”

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: He was at that time a curator at the National Collection, and Josh Taylor was director—Taylor of course had come from Chicago.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right.

DON BAUM: I knew him. He was my advisor, as a matter of fact, at some point in my thesis. And he knew what was going on—he’s, you know, very bright, intelligent, sensitive.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. But those people didn’t really know the artists. They became familiar with their work—but they had you put that show together. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah, but Walter began to get to know them.

SUE ANN KENDALL: He did?

DON BAUM: Oh yes. He’s a very special person, I think. I don’t see him, and I haven’t seen him for a long time, but I always think of him as being someone who is out there and I know he’s doing these interesting things.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So that had an impact on them in terms of putting them on the map a little bit.

DON BAUM: Yeah, the fact that somebody came from outside and was interested in the work.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: There were other people too. You know, everyone talks about this lecture that [Jean—Ed.] Dubuffet gave.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I was going to ask about that lecture.

DON BAUM: I do not think that any of these people ever heard that lecture. They may have read it later, because I believe it did. It was printed.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Were you there?

DON BAUM: No!

SUE ANN KENDALL: Hmm. Who was there?

DON BAUM: Franz Schulze, probably.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. What year was that?

DON BAUM: He claims, you see, that that's such a significant thing, and I think that's hogwash.

SUE ANN KENDALL: For him, maybe it was [significant].

DON BAUM: Yeah, maybe it was, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But who was there?

DON BAUM: I don't know. I knew the Arts Club, and attended all of their exhibitions from the time they were in the Wrigley Building, because that was one of the few places where you saw things—you know, Picasso or whatever.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: But I never went [to the lecture—Ed.]. I wasn't a member and I never went to their [events—DB]. I'm sure that none of those artists could have gone to that [the lecture—Ed.] either, because they wouldn't even have known about it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, it was early. Early fifties, wasn't it?

DON BAUM: I don't even know the date of it. But it's so often referred to, and I always think it's wrong.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Okay, so as far as you know, you don't even know who was there that it really influenced.

DON BAUM: No. In fact, I don't think it had any influence. I think that Dubuffet later became very important to all of them, and some of them went to Europe and went to the Art Brut collection and went to the German collection, you know what I'm talking about, the German collection of art of the mentally ill.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, right, the Prinzhorn. . .

DON BAUM: And they had bought the Art Brut books.

SUE ANN KENDALL: The lecture itself wasn't necessarily influential.

DON BAUM: No. I just seriously doubt that there was any direct connection with that particular lecture. There were people that came around, though. I mean, Matta was here, and I think he was maybe involved in the School [of the Art Institute—DB]. He came over to my house, I know, and I spent a wonderful time with him. He was aware of what was going on. But, you know, there weren't very many people outside of the ones that were jurors from Momentum—but they came in and they went and they did the jurying and then the dinner and then they left, you know, that was pretty much what happened there. So there wasn't much attention paid to what was going on here in those early years by anyone outside of the Chicago area.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm. What about some of the other groups? There's the False Image. How did that get named? Did you have anything to do with that at all?

DON BAUM: No, not in the name. Because they chose that name. But it was the same sort of thing. I met them, I liked the work very much, I said, "Let's do a show," and they came to the art center and we started talking about it, and they came up with this name.

SUE ANN KENDALL: The same with the Non-Plussed Some?

DON BAUM: Well, that was another one of these same kinds of things. The Hairy Who had, I guess, three shows at the art center and of course it became apparent that they were very successful. I mean, relatively speaking, they were selling their paintings for \$200, but... (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: It was again part of that period, you see, this idea of forming a group, that's how you did it. And you shared the responsibilities, you know, and so on.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And when they did it, they worked on the mounting of the shows as well?

DON BAUM: Yes. They always did that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So the presentation was more theirs than yours?

DON BAUM: I would say yes, and particularly of the earlier groups, because they had very specific ideas about it. I always felt that my role was to permit. (chuckles) And...

SUE ANN KENDALL: Provide a place to permit them to...

DON BAUM: Yeah, provide a place. Here's the atmosphere, here's the place. I did a great many shows of which I [determined the theme and name, installed them—DB], and did everything. But in the cases where the artists wanted to participate in that way, that seemed to me to be the appropriate attitude to have.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You're right in that sense: You allowed them to do what they needed to do and didn't dictate to them how things were going to be hung or whatever.

DON BAUM: No. And I just loved them. I loved the things they did and the kinds of humor... Well, you know, they were shocking!

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh very much so. Back then, especially.

DON BAUM: You know, Chicago collectors, of course, began to come to the art center.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you play a role in getting them down there?

DON BAUM: Well, that's interesting, because that's where Ruth Horwich was very important. She was already beginning to collect. And then there were several other people: Mary Weinstein. They were Hyde Parkers, and they lived around here, and Ruth was chairman of the art center. Because of their social contacts, they talked about it, they bought things, and pretty soon, all of these people were coming: Shapiro and Bergman and so on. [Joseph Randall Shapiro and Edwin Bergman—DB]

SUE ANN KENDALL: Do you think it was because she started collecting that they came?

DON BAUM: You see, collectors ordinarily, at that time, didn't come to the art center. And I think they came because they knew her, they were on this same sort of social status level—they all had money—and they knew each other. They were all friends. And they were collecting Surrealism.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: So there was all that sort of connection, as well. I mean, they intuitively grasped something here connected with something they were also interested in.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But do you think she played more of a role than you did in that?

DON BAUM: Well, at the beginning, sure, because she knew these people, and they came there, probably. I knew them too, but not on the same level as she did. They began to come and of course then it became very much the thing to do.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What about Dennis Adrian?

DON BAUM: Well, Dennis wasn't here during those years. Dennis was in New York working for Alan Frumkin. He came back into Chicago. . . He may have come to a couple of shows. I don't remember that. He didn't come to Chicago very much at that time. But he probably knew about them. He was always a friend of June Leaf's, and she was around at that time, and she knew them.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So he didn't play any role or influence at that point?

DON BAUM: Only really afterwards. Then of course he really championed them, and I think he did some very wonderful things, because he became another person that was very supportive of all of this. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. But when was that?

DON BAUM: Well, I'm trying to think whether he was around. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Was it before they went to Phyllis Kind?

DON BAUM: [thoughtful pause] It strikes me that it might have been just about that time.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That he became important.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And then he came back, and he was curator of prints at the Art Institute.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Uh huh. I thought he was around earlier. I didn't realize that. Any other collectors that took on these people's work?

DON BAUM: Well, I'm sure there were. . . I thought of Bergman, Shapiro, and Horwich—those were the three. . . But then there began to be these younger people, you know, that got into it. And there are some—well, I mean, there are some collections that had very early things in them. There began to be a younger group of collectors, you know, too—all of a sudden.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And the shows became very well known and a lot of people came, so a lot more got sold.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What about your relationship with Ruth Horwich? Was she director, and did more of the administrative things, and you were solely curator, or how did that work?

DON BAUM: Yeah. We really sort of worked together a lot at the art center, because we had this class program, a movie program, and we had to do fundraising of one kind or another. So I always worked with her, but she was primarily involved with administrative—but she loved the shows and

always bought from them. She and her husband were very, very supportive. I always found it very easy to work with Ruth. She's very open, she's very fair, and she has a genuine appreciation and interest in. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: What did you enjoy most about those years of curating shows and being there?

DON BAUM: Well, I don't know. It was just such an exciting time because all of sudden it just seemed to open up, you know, what the potentialities were.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Art in Chicago. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah.

[Interruption in taping to answer telephone]

DON BAUM: It just seemed to open things up. And I really think it was a major change. I mean, the art center created a kind of a major change. It might have happened in another way and in a slightly different timeframe. I don't know. But it catalyzed in the appropriate way.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And your role in that was significant. I think it's a real key thing for Chicago.

DON BAUM: Well, it was so exciting, you know. And it's, I don't know. The funny thing about it is really that one of the reasons I guess that I can never remember when anything in particular took place is because it was just ongoing. We had one show after another, and there was just so much to do all the time that you didn't stop to think about it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You were real involved, yes.

DON BAUM: I never stopped to think about it until. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: You weren't self-conscious about what you were doing, it was just happening. Well, you were working during those years yourself.

DON BAUM: Yeah, I was at Roosevelt.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, but I mean your own artwork.

DON BAUM: Oh yes.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you show your own. . .

DON BAUM: Yes, I showed my own work in many of the exhibitions, and I was in one of those Non-Plussed Some shows.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, you were busy indeed. Was there a leader of any of those groups? In the Hairy Who, did any one person take the lead?

DON BAUM: I never really felt that there was any obviously recognizable leader. On the other hand, when you have six personalities, you obviously have some who are going to function in a little stronger way than others. And that, I think, probably happened.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You didn't function in any way as a leader?

DON BAUM: I coordinated a lot of things and held it together, I think, at times, because somebody had to do that. But that was really more an administrative aspect, just in terms of putting on the exhibitions, not the group itself. That cohesiveness was there from the beginning, and it was the same thing with the False Image group. These four artists were good friends. . . So, you know, it was already established on the personal basis when I encountered them.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It's interesting to me, and I don't know whether there's any relationship or not, but it's interesting that earlier on there were all those little groups in the twenties and thirties here in Chicago.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And then you have the same thing occurring again in the sixties. Compare that to, say, New York, the Pop artists: There wasn't a group.

DON BAUM: But of course there was the . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Abstract Expressionists.

DON BAUM: Yeah. Well, but the New York school, I think there was a kind of . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: There was a kind of group for them.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I'm wondering if that's because survival here as an artist is so different and it took that to get some acknowledgement, perhaps?

DON BAUM: Well, it's very possible, I think.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Maybe not consciously, _____ .

DON BAUM: No, no, I understand what you're saying, and I think that's true. I think I'd be inclined to agree with that idea. . . It reinforced some things that needed to be reinforced, you know. The fact that there were six of them probably made them feel communally stronger than they would have felt individually, you know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And it worked. I mean, their shows were mounted, and people did come. And then, as you say, maybe it was also the influence of the rock groups at that point.

DON BAUM: Well, I don't think there was any influence from that, but I think the fact that that was such an important thing culturally during that period.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's what I mean.

DON BAUM: It existed. It was there. You know, it was floating through our . . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, it was a part of the zeitgeist, almost of that era. It's funny how those things seem to happen everywhere, if that's the case. What about the relationship between the different groups? I mean, you've got Rosofsky versus the Hairy Whos.

DON BAUM: Well, Seymour was a close friend of mine and an artist whose work I always admired—very much. But he was himself to some extent a kind of a loner. And I don't even know that he thought one way or the other particularly about their work. He had very specific ideas about other artists whose work he liked. But they were not necessarily contemporary artists or anything else. And I think that he always kept pretty much to himself, in a sense, as an artist figure. I mean, he

came to the art center and so on, but there was never any particular connections there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So the influences tended to stay within one group back and forth among the artists, would you say? Or did they [the groups—Ed.] also bounce off of each other?

DON BAUM: Well, eventually I think that it made waves, and lots of other younger artists were very attracted and taken with it. But I think they were very responsive to each other within the group and also from group to group. Not entirely but to a large extent. You know, to this day, sometimes, if you give a big party and you invite all of those people, they will sit in a corner among themselves and talk.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Isn't that interesting. (laughter)

DON BAUM: There could be 25 other people there that they'd know perfectly well, but they're not. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: As you say, that tells us something about the group.

DON BAUM: Sure it does.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I mean, there was was this cohesiveness that just was and still is there.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

[Tape 5, side A]

DON BAUM: You know, with the addition of some younger people, some of whom have been students of theirs—you see, they're at the age now _____ where they begin to find these people that [they] like very much. But it's a pretty tight kind of group. Because some of them now teach they're much more open and much more apt to see a lot of things. But I don't think that any of them particularly go around to the galleries. I mean, something they made, but I sort of doubt it.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Hmm. What's interesting from another point of view, too, is that somehow the egos were not, sooner or later, bouncing off each other in negative ways—they were able to maintain that cohesiveness. Because so often there'll be a breakup because of something that comes along. In this case they have maintained the group, which is quite remarkable in its own way.

DON BAUM: It is, and it's true. I think it's because there is a real common basis of attitude and feeling and. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, underlying everything. And now, of course, many years of shared experiences as well, which adds on to it. But the fact that there haven't been fallouts is quite unusual. I think schools elsewhere, sooner or later the two key figures or the three key figures, for example, end up not speaking to each other.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Other people I wanted to ask you about was your own relationship to certain people—such as Miyoko Ito—and influences back and forth—and Barbara Rossi—just other people that you've known.

DON BAUM: Well, Miyo was very important to me. I met her in Chicago in nineteen-forty. . . Let's see,

I came here in 1942, so probably about 1943. We lived in the same building on North Michigan Avenue, at Erie and Michigan; there was a rooming house there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, you talked about that.

DON BAUM: That's when we met. A lot of things happened: We both got married and had kids and so forth. And then after I began to live here, we began to see a great deal of each other again. We had a real sympathetic relationship, which extended to a feeling, I think, a feeling of admiration about each other's work, and I loved her work from the very beginning. It was a very close relationship, very important one.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Did you discuss ideas a lot? Was it on an intellectual level?

DON BAUM: We went to exhibitions a lot together. And talked about art—a lot. Because that was something which we shared in common. And Barbara [Rossi—DB], I feel somewhat the same way about. She's a very special friend of mine. She's another one of these kind of collectors, and her place is fascinating, you know, the kind of things that she has. And again, there's all kinds of shared ideas and feelings and so on. Again I admire her work very much. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Why did you leave the center? In the early seventies?

DON BAUM: Well, I just felt that somehow or another. . . I was at that point getting back into my own work. But also, I just felt like I'd done what I could do there. And, you see, by then a lot of artists had commercial galleries.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Phyllis Kind had taken on most all of those people.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And there were lots of galleries. There were all kinds of alternative spaces: NAME, ARC, Artemesia. So, for me, the basic significance of the art center had sort of ended. I didn't think about it quite in that way at the time. But I just felt like I had done a great deal. And I had gotten involved in a lot of other things, some of which were more challenging at that particular time.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Are you referring to the Arts Council work?

DON BAUM: Well, the Arts Council. You know, I was very involved.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And the MCA [Museum of Contemporary Art—Ed.] perhaps?

DON BAUM: Yeah, both of those. So, you know, I had other things that were important. And I'm the sort of person who feels like there's a point at which, if you're deeply involved in something and functioning on some kind of directorial level, there's a time when you should just move on.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right.

DON BAUM: Ruth is still the chairman of the Hyde Park Art Center. At the time that I left, I said, "Ruth, listen. My suggestion is. . ." Well, she didn't want to give it up. Her involvements were different than mine. And I think that she probably in the long run made the right decision for herself, by staying on, and the art center has survived, after many, many, many problems over many years. And I think it's largely due to her administrative ability and ability to raise money, and, you know, these are some very important things.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sure.

DON BAUM: But I mean, it functioned for her, and that was perfectly all right. But I just felt like somebody new should enter this scene.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Take over, yeah.

[Brief passage deleted per DB instructions]

SUE ANN KENDALL: In terms of the MCA, you've been on their board for many, many years, and you did that wonderful show ["Don Baum Says Chicago Needs Famous Artists"—DB], late sixties, for them. What has been your role there, over the years?

DON BAUM: Well, when the museum started, there was an artist on the board, George Cohen. In fact, not long ago at a board meeting somebody made the remark—I thought it was so funny that they would actually say it—something about a token artist. [both chuckle]

SUE ANN KENDALL: And you were right there.

DON BAUM: Some board member and, you know, I'm sitting there.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's right. (uproarious laughter) Did anybody connect with the fact that you were sitting right there?

DON BAUM: I don't know. But I loved the idea of the museum and I loved Joe Shapiro very much, and many of the other people. . . He was, of course, the first president. And then, you know, the first director was Jan Van der Marck. I found him to be a very exciting guy, and I loved the shows that he did. I mean, they really took Chicago by storm. The early years were marvelous.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: And he had this opening. Beverly Pepper. Do you know who she is?

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, sure. I love her work.

DON BAUM: She was a friend of Jan's. she was having a show there, and something went wrong. I've forgotten exactly what it was, but the downstairs, or what I referred to as the basement of the museum, was like a blank. So Jan called me up, and he said, "if you would be interested in doing a show [in the lower level—DB], you have a month or something to do it." Well, that's when I did this show, the one called "Don Baum Says Chicago Needs Famous Artists." There's no visual documentation.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I was wondering about that, because you did such a marvelous thing from what I've read.

DON BAUM: It was so fabulous. But we returned that thing, you know, to a basement; we had a furnace. And it was just so wonderful.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah, yeah.

DON BAUM: It included naive artists: Pauline Simons, and there were several other people like that, as well as all of these other artists.

SUE ANN KENDALL: You're the one that curated that.

DON BAUM: I curated it, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And you created the whole environment.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And then I did the “Made in Chicago” show that went to Sao Paolo and toured South America. When it came back to Chicago, it was at the Contemporary Museum, and Steve Prokopoff was at that time the director. And we were very good friends. He asked me to do a show downstairs that would supplement this, so I thought up the idea of doing a show of their. . . Well, I said “Sources,” Sources of Chicago Artists, because I feel that that’s something which most of the people don’t ever know. You know, if you know artists, and you go to their homes, you see this stuff, but otherwise you don’t really know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: Well, it got into a bit of a hassle because. . . Jim Nutt, for example, felt that. . . And there is a letter in the Archives that I gave [them—Ed.] that was just a very interesting letter from Jim about this, because he was furious about it. Because he felt that if you were going to do this show you had to show Siennese painting.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Ummm.

DON BAUM: You know, in other words, why didn’t we borrow the whatever from the Art Institute. Well, you know, it was just impossible to do it in that way.

SUE ANN KENDALL: To get together in a month’s time.

DON BAUM: So finally Jim did. . . You know, he’s a collector, and he and Gladys [Nilsson—Ed.] were in California. Anyway, Steve went to see them, but they just sort of finally dropped out of it. But Ed Flood was in it, and all of these other people, and we called it “Sources.” You know that catalogue.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm.

DON BAUM: That was one of my most favorite experiences, that show, because I went around and looked at everybody’s stuff. It was just great; it was like taking all the debris in the world and organizing it into these categories. (laughs) Fabulous, fabulous. So I did that exhibition and that was a very exiting time.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Your presence on the board. . . What kind of an impact did you have?

DON BAUM: Well, I was chairman of the exhibitions committee for quite a long time. And I enjoyed that. But, you know, like all big institutions, the Contemporary Museum was a power thing. And the necessity to raise the kind of money becomes such an incredibly important issue. It was an issue which really did not interest me. And actually at this point, although I’m still a trustee and I’m on the education committee, that’s one thing which I don’t feel like I want to deal with. You know, that just doesn’t interest me. It became very much involved in all sorts of things like that, you know. You do this show because. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Politics.

DON BAUM: Yeah. So when the time came I resigned from that, and then I just. . . I’ve enjoyed being on the education committee; I feel like I have something to contribute there, and it’s much lower key and. . . I enjoy the museum. I don’t always enjoy what they do, but I feel like it was necessary in

Chicago. For instance, I'm not gung ho about their having a permanent collection. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, right.

DON BAUM: It's an enormous responsibility on many levels. It changes the nature of the institution. I've also felt that some of the directors have been better than others. More avant garde. I prefer something which is on forefront, rather than something which is, you know. . . I mean, like the Kienholz show this year. I was interested in Kienholz twenty years ago. I'm not interested in Kienholz now. I mean, the work is basically the same, and it doesn't have much relevance, I think, at this point.

SUE ANN KENDALL: It doesn't have the edge that it did.

DON BAUM: Yeah, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's very true. What about the Illinois Arts Council? How did you get involved there?

DON BAUM: Oh, well, that was really good. Leonard Pas was the director, the first director, and George Irwin [the first chairman—DB]. Do you know him, by any chance?

SUE ANN KENDALL: No, I don't.

DON BAUM: Well, he's somebody that should be talked to, and he's someone, probably, who might have important papers. George lives in Quincy, Illinois. His family's been there for many years. And Quincy is an old town.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: One that had lots [of] wealth and so on. George was on the National Endowment, a friend of various people in Washington, and so on. And he's really the one that was responsible for the Arts Council here; he started it, really. And I think Leonard had worked for him, maybe in Quincy as the director of the Fine Arts Association, or something; that's how he knew Leonard. Anyway, they came to Chicago and started this thing, and at a certain point I met them, and Leonard—we always got along very well—asked me if I would come on a consultant, do an exhibition of Illinois painters for circulation. So I spent about two years working on that. I went out, looked at work. . . I traveled all over the state at that time. . . and put together these four exhibitions that could be combined as one. We circulated them in parts in different ways. And then, at the point at which I got divorced, Leonard wanted me to come on the staff as a full-time person in the visual arts. I just didn't do that. I didn't feel like I wanted to give up teaching. And I didn't feel like I could do it income-wise. So we made this deal where I was a half-time person. So I worked there for many, many years—ten years or so—actually probably doing a full-time job and getting half the pay, but what's the difference.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right.

DON BAUM: [unintelligible]. So now I've got a health insurance for life.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. Good old government benefits. But you enjoyed that work.

DON BAUM: I loved it. Because it was a natural extension of all kinds of things which I'd done before. I knew the art scene and, after I'd done this first show, I knew what was going on in Illinois, not only

in Chicago, but. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Because you traveled the state.

DON BAUM: Yeah. I have a certain pleasure in a certain kind of administration, and I always have very good people who work for me. It was a very rich experience. Also it was a low-key experience in terms of the council and the politics of it. In the early years, there wasn't much of that, but, you know, it doesn't take long.

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's true. (laughs)

DON BAUM: And then, of course, you know, it becomes something else entirely.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, it was the kind of work you really enjoyed. It wasn't something you hated to do.

DON BAUM: No. See, I guess I have a strong interest in this kind of entrepreneurial sort of activity—and I find myself involved in it! It's funny because it just seems to go on and on. . . I'm on the exhibitions committee at the Arts Club, and I saw this work at Carbondale, all these things that they've cast, these wonderful people and things—one of my [phone—Ed.] calls [earlier in the interview—Ed.] was from Pat, and she said, "Well, would you work on organizing?" "Well," I said, "yes." (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Here you go again! (laughter)

DON BAUM: So it does go on. There is something else which I'm probably going to be doing, too, another exhibition. I don't know, I think it fulfils something for me that I like.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, well, that's pretty clear with what you've done. A lot of creative energy has gone into that kind of activity.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And I don't feel like it interferes, you know. Particularly now, when I'm not teaching, it makes a great deal of difference.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Well, I think it's wonderful. You live both sides, which you can do and do very well, and you enjoy that. . .

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: I wanted to talk a little bit about Chicago, looking back in retrospect at the sixties, that era. The work that came to the forefront at that time. . . How much has that work influenced what's going on now? In Chicago.

DON BAUM: In Chicago. A lot.

SUE ANN KENDALL: First of all Chicago, and then we'll go on from there.

DON BAUM: I think a lot. And, in general, interestingly enough, I feel it's less a kind of obvious and direct influence than it is a kind of attitude about work. You see, I think it made many Chicago artists who really are probably more hermetic, more inward in terms of their visual production, feel comfortable about it. To accept that in themselves and not feel necessarily that they had to be a part of anything which was ongoing in the world elsewhere, especially the New York art world. I

think it the air to some extent in that way, and that's important, I think, because it gave them something which they already had, but it made it possible for them to be sort of. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Be comfortable with it.

DON BAUM: . . .be comfortable with it, right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Rather than feeling they were fighting new ground or whatever.

DON BAUM: Yeah. And, you know, you see things; obviously somebody's looked at Gladys Nilsson's watercolors, whatever. But that's sort of unimportant, and any direct imitations are always just direct imitations. On the other hand, things which take from—as all art does to some extent—from some, the internal aspect of it, then that's a valuable contribution, and that's how art is learned.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Why do you think that Chicago art is more hermetic? I mean, you've said yourself, that in general there is that tendency.

DON BAUM: Well, you know. . . In fact I may have talked about this before in the other part of the tape, but I don't remember. Did we have a conversation about it?

SUE ANN KENDALL: I don't think so, not about Chicago.

DON BAUM: You know it's a question which has been so much talked about. And a lot of people have a feeling that it has something to do specifically with Chicago in a physical sense.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right.

DON BAUM: Well, I think that that's a very. . . That's very relative and maybe very minor. I think that Chicago is a city, and that's important. Because it has all the richness of any other city. It has in not only the variety of people that live here, but also in the sort of products and byproducts of urban civilization. I don't think, you know, that such and such a development could have occurred in a small town. I mean, it has something to do with the fact that there's this kind of intensity and energy that is a part of a city. See, I feel that historically the Chicago artist has tended to be very much his own person. And if you think about immediately preceding history, somebody like [Ivan—DB] Albright. Well, Albright is really an isolated figure, in world art. Why was he? Because he had this kind of vision that was so specifically his own, and he felt apparently no need to relate to anything else that was going on. And you see somebody like Gertrude Abercrombie; it's the same kind of thing. I don't think any of this really explains, except that there are all these factors, and the factors are things like the Field Museum, like the kind of aesthetic that was held by someone like Blackshear—and Whitney Halstead. I mean, those are formative things. There is the availability of culture. You know. Because it's a city.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Sure.

DON BAUM: It's like Maxwell Street Market in a sense. So that's all very available. Well, it's available with smaller towns too, but not to the same degree and not with this kind of richness that is so wonderful about Chicago. I think too that Chicago artists, until fairly recent years, you know, have lived pretty much like middle-class citizens: in apartments, old apartment buildings, where they don't have vast lofts. Now [lofts] are more common—fairly common, in fact. But for such a long time, artists worked pretty much in some room, in their apartments, you know. The kind of a lifestyle that just seems to have. . . Well, I think it's important. Cliff Westermann talked about Chicago one time, and about what had been important to him. Well, he's a kind of godfather of the Chicago imagists.

He not only came from here, but he was well known by, many artists. Many—I would say all, practically—in this category certainly have been very responsive to his work.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Um hmm, right.

DON BAUM: But Cliff told me one time that one of things that he loved about Chicago was just walking around different areas of the city. . . And he said, “It wasn’t like I’m going out to look,” he said, “I just lived in these different places, and I felt this kind of constant sort of fascination with the neighborhoods, with the kinds of stores and all of that sort of stuff.” Again, you see, that’s the city thing, but I don’t think it’s specifically about Chicago; it’s about the city.

SUE ANN KENDALL: But then, New Yorkers have all of those things also.

DON BAUM: Yeah, well, I think they responded differently to the city in some ways. I mean, I think Abstract Expressionism is direct response in some ways to the city, but. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: It’s a different response.

DON BAUM: It’s a different response. It isn’t the grandeur of Chicago, and I think Chicago has a kind of visual grandeur that’s really something. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Oh, it does.

DON BAUM: . . .that is important to these artists. It’s really the alleys. It’s in the garbage cans maybe or whatever. (laughs) And of course, you know, that’s sort of interesting that, when you think about something like the Ashcan School and how that was a break with a tradition. It was like a turning to your own stuff, you know.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right, right.

DON BAUM: What is our stuff here?

SUE ANN KENDALL: You’re saying that same thing about these people in Chicago.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Using that and not feeling pressed to make it look like New York or to make it more like that.

DON BAUM: Yeah.

SUE ANN KENDALL: What about the relationship of—and again, this is a hackneyed question at this point—the relationship of the sixties work to what’s going on now, in the larger art world? There’s already been stuff written about that, but I’m curious to know how you feel about it. Or is it even important?

DON BAUM: Well, I don’t think it’s particularly important. At this point in time, most of these artists are not only established, but they also have an established mode of expressing themselves. And that isn’t going to change now, because they’re mature artists and they’re in the peak of their careers. I think younger artists are, you know, going to go through a great deal—oh, naturally and obviously—through a great many changes. But I don’t know, going to Art Expo, I just feel that increasingly what you encounter is this international style. I’ve looked at a lot of art in France, and

what's going on in Paris has no flavor that has anything particularly French about it. It's international-style art. Some of it is good, and some of it isn't so good. I don't think it makes any difference, because I think there are younger artists that are doing very interesting work and who will probably become very well known. You see, last night they talked about eight or nine graduate students, and they showed slides. I enjoyed very much seeing them because I didn't know any of their work. And I too felt, as they obviously did in presenting them, that these were people that have very great potentiality. But it doesn't have anything necessarily to do with the art of Jim [Nutt—DB] or Gladys [Nilsson—DB] or. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: These were Chicago artists.

DON BAUM: Yeah, these were all graduate students at the School of the Art Institute.

SUE ANN KENDALL: And you're saying it more matches what you are terming international style?

DON BAUM: I would say it's a little bit more related to that, and these happened to be very talented young artists. It was interesting to me. Here are three of these people—Ray [Yoshida—DB] and Christina [Ramberg—DB] and Phil [Hansen—DB]—sitting there, and these are their students, but the work is not like their work. Christina at one point said something about the prevailing mode in the school now having probably a greater interest in expressionism.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Which is coming from the world at large.

DON BAUM: Yes, that's right. And, you see, it doesn't have much connection with. . .

SUE ANN KENDALL: Chicago, whatever.

DON BAUM: Right.

SUE ANN KENDALL: So in a way, this maybe was the last vestige of something that was particular to Chicago. . .

DON BAUM: Maybe. Yeah, very possible.

SUE ANN KENDALL: . . .because what's coming out is more related to the international scene than to anything specific about Chicago. Interesting to reflect on whether or not it's so overwhelming an influence that they can't escape it.

DON BAUM: Well, I don't know. Artists synthesize, you know, so easily, in a certain way. I mean, that's part of being an artist—this ability to sort of take in information, utilize it—or not utilize it—but to synthesize. I think that that's a process which is ongoing, obviously, and which is happening here.

[Tape 5, side B]

SUE ANN KENDALL: I'm just about finished with my questions here, but I wanted to ask you a little about your trip to Indonesia, just to bring things up to date, and your NEA [National Endowment for the Arts—Ed.] grant. Why you went, why you chose Indonesia, and so on.

DON BAUM: Yeah. It was a funny experience because, again, it was an unconscious thing. I had been making these—in fact, three or four years, when I was making the first houses—anyway, at a certain point, I was making these houses. . . I thought about them as being boat people houses,

about the boat people. They were on stilts. . . Well, I didn't even realize how accurate they were till I got there. (laughter) And suddenly there they were. Because I didn't, I never went and looked at anything, or anything like that.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Yeah.

DON BAUM: But when I got this grant, which was very thrilling because it sort of freed me for the first time to really do some things that I have long wanted to do. It was very nonspecific in terms of what I could do, and one of the things which I asked, thought about doing, was traveling. And at that point, when I applied for the grant, I wanted to go over to the Scandinavian countries, I don't know why. But as time went on, I got more and more interested in the idea of going to Asia. And that's really what decided it. I can honestly say it was a very significant experience. I don't have any idea whether it will in any way change my work, or anything like that. I mean, I didn't make any drawings. I took a lot of photographs, but they're not really for that research purpose, I don't think. But I always feel that every experience evokes eventually, and that it'll have whatever potency it should have. But I felt very altered by Indonesia, partly because I'd never been in a culture which was non-Western before, and particularly where you encounter cultures which are religious cultures. I mean, you don't encounter that in Europe. And suddenly, here was Sumatra and Suluwesi that are Moslem, and then Buddhism in Bali and Burma and. . . It was an absolutely fascinating kind of experience in that way for me, because I realized that people deal with their lives in such a different way than we do in the West, and their whole point of view about things was different. So it was real, it sort of turned me around a little bit in terms of my thinking. But, again, I don't even know how this, if it ever does, will manifest itself in my art; it may or may not. I felt very good about being able to travel in the last year or so. And, you know, going to France has been important. You know, France is a place where I've been quite often in my life. I think it's the fifth time that I was there, in March. I feel very comfortable there. In a certain way it has a quality to me that's a little bit like Chicago. (laughs)

SUE ANN KENDALL: That's interesting. (laughs)

DON BAUM: I don't know why I think that, but. . . There is something about it that I feel very comfortable there. And of course, there are always things to see, and right now, of course, there's a great deal of attention being paid to the nineteenth century, and I'm very interested in that whole area, nineteenth century.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Nineteenth century what? American art?

DON BAUM: No, European art.

SUE ANN KENDALL: European art, then.

DON BAUM: French art and symbolist art. And unfortunately they had this big Vienna show at the Beaubourg, and I went four times, but I couldn't get in without waiting for two hours, so I didn't see it. I was sick about it, but I just couldn't; I couldn't stand in line for two hours. (chuckles)

SUE ANN KENDALL: Right. What are your plans coming up?

DON BAUM: I have none. I'm going to have the show in February. And I'm going to continue to work towards that, and I don't know, just let it happen.

SUE ANN KENDALL: Organizing and curating and working. Terrific. Well, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

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